

Washington State Fusion Center
INFOCUS



TUESDAY – 12 DEC 2017



	International	National	Regional and Local
Events, Opportunities Go to articles	12/12 High security at Paris climate summit 12/12 NKorea: matchless nuke weapons state 12/12 UN: sanctions could hurt NKorea people 12/12 Homeless in Rio skyrockets: violence up 12/12 SKorea drills ahead of Winter Games 12/12 Group: EU complicit in Libya abuse 12/12 Strong quake rocks southern Iran 12/12 Severe winter storm hits France 12/11 Putin criticizes US on Jerusalem move 12/11 UN promises justice in Congo assault 12/11 Hezbollah chief vows focus on Israel	12/12 Latest developments in Calif. wildfires 12/12 Dangerous winds persist w/Calif. fires 12/12 Cost fighting Calif. wildfires nears \$40M 12/11 Climate change to blame Calif. fires? 12/11 Huge Calif. wildfire continues to grow 12/11 Firefighters battle fatigue in California 12/11 UN envoy visits Puerto Rico to assess 12/11 NASA to send astronauts back to moon 12/11 Hanukkah celebrations security concerns 12/11 Court: transgenders can enlist in military 12/11 Supreme Court declines gay rights case 12/11 Military: learning from hurricane season 12/11 Emergency mgt. programs to policies	12/11 Report: SPD shot 36 people since 2010 12/11 Seattle City Light CEO pay on-par 12/11 Seattle 'sweeps' unconstitutional? 12/11 Seattle imposes new limits on Airbnb 12/11 Wildfire smoke drifts into Seattle again 12/11 De-escalate Washington Initiative 940 12/11 SPD: detailed report of Lyles shooting 12/11 East Bellevue bans safe injection site 12/11 Protesters lock selves to PSE crane
Cyber Awareness Go to articles	12/12 Bitcoin slips: futures volumes drop 12/12 Ransomware bitcoin problem for crooks 12/12 Facing dissent, Ethiopia turns to spyware 12/11 Anonymous hacks Norway whaling firms 12/11 Ransomware at businesses spike in 2017 12/11 Public WiFi exploited to generate Monero 12/11 Banking Trojans sneak into Google Play 12/11 New variant Blind ransomware emerges 12/11 Necurs botnet returns to prevalence	12/12 Survey: 83% physicians faced cyberattack 12/11 What is net neutrality? 12/11 Cybersecurity spending surges up 12/11 Top selling handgun safe vulnerable 12/11 Secret message apps on rise at work 12/11 Jailed hacker claims directed by FSB 12/11 SEC warns on buying cryptocurrencies 12/11 'MoneyTaker' stole \$11M; targeted banks 12/11 BBB: tech support scam worldwide issue 12/11 Tex. agriculture data breach exposes kids	
Terror Conditions Go to articles	12/12 Freed prisoner: radicalization Egypt jails 12/12 Afghan official: Taliban kill 3 soldiers 12/11 More ISIS militants surrender in Mosul 12/11 Russia: partial troop withdrawal Syria 12/11 Putin visits Russia base in Syria	12/12 NYC bomber not on Bangladesh list 12/12 Houston man charged w/terror support 12/12 Bangladesh condemns NYC terror attack 12/11 Security challenge for transport systems 12/11 How many times ISIS attacked US? 12/11 NCTC chief: ISIS attacks adapting 12/11 Expert: NYC attack 'new norm' 12/11 Rising threat lone-wolf terror 12/11 Bomber's family blames police 12/11 Suspect pledged allegiance to ISIS 12/11 NYC terror suspect 'low-tech' device 12/11 Suspect admits self-inspired ISIS online 12/11 NY source: attack could have been worse 12/11 Target was chosen for Christmas posters 12/11 Officials: cops pinned suspect on ground 12/11 NYC explosion 'attempted terror attack'	12/11 Sound Transit security 'extra aware'
Suspicious, Unusual Go to articles	12/12 Uruguay sets record: worlds biggest BBQ 12/12 NKorea fortune from bitcoin mania? 12/11 China preps for NKorea refugee influx 12/11 Oil prices hit two-and-half year high 12/11 NKorea nuclear test still shaking	12/12 NYC failed to destroy ID card records 12/11 St Elizabeths DHS consolidation plan 12/11 US flood risk 'severely underestimated'	12/11 ESC: 6th professor resigns after protests 12/11 Rising rents an issue in Spokane Co.
Crime, Criminals Go to articles	12/11 Italy: man drove into pedestrians to kill 12/11 Tanzania president pardons child rapists	12/12 School security changed w/Sandy Hook 12/11 Felon accused of illegal gun exports 12/11 Arrest: woman made threats on flight 12/11 Romanians admit racketeering, skimming	12/12 SPD shoots armed robbery suspect 12/11 King Co. bans youth solitary confinement 12/11 PCSO: 3rd Graham suspect turns self in 12/11 Tacoma: arrests in PSE crane protest 12/11 Everett: 5 teens arrested in shooting 12/11 Teens arrested in shooting released 12/11 Renton PD: groping, attempted luring

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Event Calendar

[Top of page](#)

Date	Event	Location/Time	Other Information
9-13 Apr 2018	LEIU/IALEIA Training Event	Marriott Hotel, 700 West Convention Way Anaheim, CA 92801 (714) 750-8000	http://www.ialeia.org/2018_conference.php
Return to Top	**indicates new event/new information added during reporting week		

Events, Opportunities

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Report: SPD shot 36 people since 2010
SOURCE	https://patch.com/washington/seattle/36-people-shot-seattle-police-2010-report
GIST	<p>SEATTLE, WA - A new database of police shootings in the U.S. shows that 36 people were shot by Seattle police between 2010 and 2016 and nearly half died from their wounds. Vice News compiled the data from the 47 largest police departments in the U.S. for a story published Monday.</p> <p>According to the data, 17 people died after being shot by Seattle police between 2010 and 2016. Racially, blacks and whites made up a majority of shooting victims (27), but white people were more likely to die in a shooting. Ten out of 15 white people shot died while four out of 12 black people died. Two Native Americans were shot during the period, and both died.</p> <p>All but one of the shooting victims was a man. Twenty-four of the shootings involved white Seattle officers, according to the data.</p> <hr/> <p>Two of the shootings were found "not justified," according to the data, but one of those decisions was overturned by Chief Kathleen O'Toole.</p> <p>In one shooting, which happened Dec. 31, 2014, three officers opened fire when two cars exchanging gunfire drove by them along South Eddy Street. When police stopped one of the vehicles, there was no gun inside, although a gun was found on the street nearby. The Force Review Board ruled the shooting not within department policy and recommended the officers for discipline - but O'Toole overrode that decision.</p> <p>On Sept. 4, 2013, an officer cornered a woman in a parking lot in North Seattle. The officer's gun went off, apparently unintentionally, and wounded the woman. She lived and was later taken to jail on felony and misdemeanor warrants.</p> <p>There have been three high-profile Seattle police shootings in 2017. In June, two officers shot and killed Charleena Lyles in her Magnuson Park apartment. In early October, multiple officers opened fire on a vehicle as it fled from them. In April, police shot and killed Damarius Butts after he apparently opened fire on them during a foot pursuit in downtown Seattle.</p>
Return to Top	See the Seattle police shooting statistics here

HEADLINE	12/11 Military: learning from hurricane season
SOURCE	https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1393074/military-seeks-to-learn-lessons-of-2017-hurricane-season/
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON, Dec. 11, 2017 — The most recent hurricane season was not unprecedented in terms of the number of storms, but it was unprecedented in terms of damage, the commander of U.S. Army North said in a recent interview.</p> <p>Army Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Buchanan said hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria delivered a combination of blows that caused great damage in Texas, Florida, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, and the military</p>

learned a great deal about defense support to civil authorities in the process.

Thousands of military personnel from all components mobilized and deployed to help the affected areas, and Buchanan -- as the Joint Force Land Component commander -- was in the thick of it.

U.S. Army North is the Army component for U.S. Northern Command. It works hand in glove with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the three storms were the largest domestic incident response in the history of that agency. "It was much larger than Katrina [in 2005]," Buchanan said. "It was many more days and from the total response of the government aspect, it was much larger."

The swath covered by the storms contributed to the response.

Storms

Hurricane Harvey -- a Category 4 hurricane when it hit the Texas coast -- dropped record amounts of rain on Houston. Parts of the fourth largest city in the United States received more than 60 inches of rain.

Hurricane Irma -- a Category 5 storm -- hit the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Florida and Georgia.

Hurricane Maria -- a second Category 5 storm -- caused catastrophic damage in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

The storms hit close together, with Harvey lasting from Aug. 17 to Sept. 1, Irma lasting from Aug. 30 to Sept. 12, and Maria forming Sept. 16 and finally dissipating Sept. 30.

Officials said Harvey killed 82 people, Irma claimed 134 and the official death toll from Maria is 52.

The extent of the damage from all three storms was substantial and some officials estimate it could cost up to \$200 billion.

The military response matched the size of the disasters. Thousands of National Guardsmen, reservists and active-duty personnel took part in search and rescue recovery operations.

Define the Problem

There were a lot of lessons learned from the response and defense support of civil authorities, Buchanan said, adding that he is putting them together for next year. "I believe that at the operational level you have to define the problem," he said. "At the operational level the guidance is usually broad. If you spend your energy solving a problem, but you don't really know what the problem is you may be off to the races in the wrong direction.

"I should have involved my staff more in this process," he continued. "I internally defined the problem and I got a quicker answer, but I am not sure I couldn't have gotten a better, more informed position."

The three storms required different responses. The state emergency management agencies had different capacities, equipment and personnel. Texas and Florida have large emergency management agencies and large National Guard forces and the capacity to cover large incidents.

"In Texas, we sent a forward command post with about 28 guys, which we beefed up to about 80," he said. With the main headquarters for U.S. Army North in San Antonio, this acted as an extension of the command nearer the disaster area.

"In Florida, I had an even smaller footprint," he said. "We sent about 10 guys with a lot of communications capability to link in with the dual-status commander and be essentially a liaison cell."

Puerto Rico

But Puerto Rico really required something different, Buchanan said, including personal presence. He had to go to San Juan and had a much more robust headquarters.

In Puerto Rico, the island was completely overwhelmed. “It was overwhelmed first because it had weak infrastructure, it was vulnerable,” he said. “There were no underground power cables, for example, it was aboveground and it was old.”

The island was overwhelmed because of its small capacity and because it is isolated, the general said. “You can’t drive down I-10 or I-35 to bring in a bunch of stuff or people,” he said.

Finally, the power of the storms was extraordinary -- two Category 5 hurricanes separated by just 10 days. “[Maria] was a devastating storm and it didn’t just glance off the island, it hit on the southeast corner and went across the island and exited on the northwest,” Buchanan said. “It affected literally every part of the island. If we had the same storm in Texas or Florida, the effects would have been the same.”

Puerto Rico was a mammoth effort, he said. “We flew 2,200 sorties of strategic lift flying in [Puerto Rico],” the general said. “There was more than 2,300 rotary wing flight hours.”

National Guardsmen immediately responded and a Navy group centered around the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp sailed to the island as soon as it was safe enough to do so. National Guardsmen, sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen launched immediate search and rescue operations.

The hurricane cut the island off from its lifelines, so among the first tasks was reopening the airports and seaports.

Role of Culture in Recovery

The relief effort was initially a maritime command, but it switched to Buchanan's command. He said his initial lesson was that he needed to understand the culture. “Except for an overnight years before, I had never been in Puerto Rico,” he said. “We really have to understand what is going on with people if we want to be effective. In the end, it is all about dealing with people. As an outsider to Puerto Rico ... it is easy to make judgments and snap decisions and that is dangerous.”

One aspect of the culture that jumped out to him was the power of community and the power of family. “It is far more important than it is in other areas of the United States,” the general said. “Once I recognized this, I was able to provide positive reinforcement when I saw neighbors helping neighbors, and then use that as a means to understand what was important to their culture.”

Buchanan said he learned that communicating with the community is an important aspect of the recovery process. “We were clearing the roads, but we were leaving the debris by the side of the road, and people wondered why,” he said. “Hauling the debris away would take time from the clearance operations. Hiring a local firm to haul away the debris is cheaper, and it pumps money into the economy. We had to communicate that.”

The work that followed the storms was led by Puerto Rican Governor Ricardo Rossello, who was in charge on the island, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which worked with Puerto Rican officials to determine what needed to be done. The military worked through those civilian agencies, and Buchanan said he sees no need for that to change.

A full after action report is working through the system now, the general said. He wants any recommendations made in place well before hurricane season begins in the spring.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Emergency mgt. programs to policies
SOURCE	https://edmdigest.com/news/emergency-management-programs-policies/
GIST	<p>There have been a number of programs in the history of emergency management that were so successful they were developed into national policies. The Incident Command System, a program originally started by firefighters fighting the wildfires in California, moved from a departmental-wide policy to a federal policy initiative when it was implemented in emergency management agencies throughout the country.</p> <p>Recently, in an effort to manage non-emergency patients utilizing ambulances and emergency departments throughout the country, a new concept — the Community Paramedic Program — started at one emergency medical services agency. It quickly swept across the country as more and more agencies recognized the benefits associated with using such a model. Recently in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, the Community Paramedic Program has been implemented into law by the state legislature, shifting just how patients will receive medical care in Wisconsin.</p> <p>The creation of a policy in support of the Community Paramedic Program will greatly shift the overall paradigm and legitimacy of this program. It will enhance how this program is implemented in communities across the country.</p> <p>For example, how agencies handle active shooter situations is another concept that is sweeping across the country and is reshaping just how emergency management is handled through the overall design of the Rescue Task Force.</p> <p>Innovative programs like the Rescue Task Force and the Community Paramedic Program are changing how resources are managed during crises. Further, when programs are demonstrated to be successful, they often become the subject of a government working to make that policy more of a reality by legitimizing it through legislation. More importantly, it is the fuel that reshapes how emergencies are managed.</p> <p>Healthcare has been at the forefront of policy initiatives for decades, because the system isn't working for numerous reasons. Legislation that supports the Community Paramedic Program, however, can be a catalyst for reshaping healthcare in a positive direction.</p> <p>As new programs emerge to help solve some of the logistical and managerial problems associated with emergency management, new concepts may emerge for what programs should be implemented as state and federal policies. As the Community Paramedic Program gathers steam and agencies work to implement the concept throughout the country, more and more states may work to create legislation to support the program.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Community Paramedic Program may very well shape how healthcare is administered in the United States. More importantly, we may witness it becoming a federal policy as more and more evidence suggests that the program may be essential in resource allocation.</p>
	<p>Return to</p> <p>Top</p>

HEADLINE	12/12 SKorea drills ahead of Winter Games
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-olympics-2018/south-korea-conducts-anti-terror-drills-ahead-of-winter-games-idUSKBN1E60VO?il=0
GIST	<p>PYEONGCHANG, South Korea (Reuters) - Set to host the Winter Olympics in February, South Korea conducted a series of security drills on Tuesday to prepare against terror attacks ranging from a hostage situation, a vehicle ramming a stadium and a bomb-attached to a drone.</p> <p>Police and firemen were among around 420 personnel participating in the exercise, held in front of the Olympic Stadium at Pyeongchang, just 80 km (50 miles) from the heavily fortified border with North Korea.</p> <p>During the simulated drills, members of a SWAT team shot down a drone with a bomb attached that was</p>

flying toward a bus carrying athletes.

In another part of the mock exercise a terrorist took hostage athletes on a bus, and tried to ram the vehicle into the stadium before being gunned down by police. Officers in gas masks also removed a chemical bomb.

Anxiety on the Korean Peninsula has been rising in recent months due to a series of missile tests by North Korea as it continues its pursuit of nuclear weapons in defiance of U.N. sanctions and warnings from the United States.

“Please keep in mind that accidents always happen where no one has expected,” South Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon said.

“Please check until the last minute whether there are any security loopholes.”

Lee did not mention North Korea, but South Korea’s Defense Ministry on Friday flagged risks that North Korea could resort to terrorist or cyber attacks to spoil international events.

Some 5,000 armed forces personnel will be deployed at the Winter Games, according to South Korean government officials and documents reviewed by Reuters.

Pyeongchang’s organizing committee for the 2018 Games (POCOG) has also hired a private cyber security company to guard against a hacking attack from the North, tender documents show.

To minimize the risk of provoking an aggressive North Korean reaction during the games, South Korea has asked Washington to delay regular joint military exercises until after the Olympics, the Financial Times reported. A spokesman for South Korea’s defense ministry said on Tuesday that nothing has been decided.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 East Bellevue bans safe injection sites
SOURCE	http://www.bellevureporter.com/news/east-bellevue-community-council-follows-citys-ban-on-safe-injection-sites/
GIST	<p>The East Bellevue Community Council voted to ban community health engagement locations, also known as safe injection sites, at its monthly council meeting Tuesday.</p> <p>In a 4-0 vote, the Community Council approved the Bellevue City Council’s Ordinance No. 6376, which permanently banned the sites this past October.</p> <p>Ordinance No. 6376, the permanent measure, amends Bellevue’s land-use code to impose a prohibition on the sites, locations or other uses or activities designed to provide a location for people to consume illicit drugs intravenously or by other means, throughout the city.</p> <p>Vice Chair Steve Kasner said approximately 50-60 people attended the meeting. About three were in favor of safe injection sites because they believed the locations would help those who are addicted to opioids. But 20-30 were against them, as they said they thought the implementation of safe injection sites would be a magnet for crime, Kasner said.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/12 High security at Paris climate summit
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/04476ffc97cb48e8b504d92207c12c29/World-leaders,-high-security-at-Paris-climate-summit

<p>GIST</p>	<p>PARIS (AP) — More than 50 world leaders are joining bankers, energy magnates and others Tuesday in Paris for a summit that President Emmanuel Macron hopes will give new momentum to the fight against global warming — despite U.S. President Donald Trump’s rejection of the Paris climate accord.</p> <p>Sean Penn, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bill Gates and Elon Musk are among prominent figures joining the world leaders at the summit, where participants are expected to announce billions of dollars’ worth of projects to help poor countries and industries reduce emissions.</p> <p>Activists kept up pressure with a protest in the shadow of the domed Pantheon monument calling for an end to all investment in oil, gas and resource mining.</p> <p>That wasn’t far from the message from top officials opening the summit: They agreed that the global financial system isn’t shifting fast enough away from carbon emissions and toward energy and business projects that don’t aggravate climate change.</p> <p>“Financial pledges need to flow faster through more streamlined system and make a difference on the ground,” said Fiji’s Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama, whose island nation is among those on the front lines of the rising sea levels and extreme storms worsened by human-made emissions.</p> <p>“We are all in the same canoe,” rich countries and poor, he said.</p> <p>Some 3,100 security personnel are fanned out around Paris for Tuesday’s event, including extra patrol boats along the Seine River.</p> <p>The summit, co-hosted by the U.N., World Bank and Macron, is being held on the second anniversary of the Paris climate accord, ratified by 170 countries.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

<p>HEADLINE</p>	<p>12/12 Dangerous winds persist; fuel Calif. fires</p>
<p>SOURCE</p>	<p>https://apnews.com/7fec04af7d4f4deca17c8684bbef754b/Dangerous-winds-persist-as-wildfires-roar-in-California</p>
<p>GIST</p>	<p>LOS ANGELES (AP) — The winds aren’t changing for Southern California’s wildfires yet.</p> <p>The fifth largest blaze in state history was threatening thousands of homes as it churned through coastal mountains amid persistently dangerous weather conditions.</p> <p>Red Flag warnings for fire danger due to Santa Ana winds and a critical lack of moisture were extended into the week instead of expiring Monday afternoon as was initially forecast.</p> <p>“It doesn’t get much drier than this folks,” the National Weather Service Service tweeted, adding that more than 80 observation sites in the region reported afternoon relative humidity levels between just 1 and 9 percent.</p> <p>On Monday, ash fell like snow and heavy smoke had residents gasping for air in foothill towns near Santa Barbara, the latest flare-up after a week of wind-fanned wildfires throughout the region.</p> <p>With acrid smoke thick in the air, even residents not under evacuation orders were leaving, fearing another shutdown of a key coastal highway that was closed intermittently last week.</p> <p>Officials handed out masks to those who stayed behind in Montecito, an exclusive community about 75 miles (120 kilometers) northwest of Los Angeles that’s home to stars such as Oprah Winfrey, Jeff Bridges and Drew Barrymore.</p> <p>The blaze — known as the Thomas fire — has destroyed 683 homes, officials said. It was partially</p>

contained after burning 362 square miles (937 square kilometers) of dry brush and timber.

Santa Ana winds have long contributed to some of the region’s most disastrous wildfires. They blow from the inland toward the Pacific Ocean, speeding up as they squeeze through mountain passes and canyons.

The National Weather Service said that if the long-term forecast holds, there will have been 13 consecutive days of dry offshore flow before it ends Friday afternoon. There have only been 17 longer streaks since 1948, including the record of 24 days set between December 1953 and January 1954.

High fire risk is expected to last into January.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Hanukkah celebrations security concerns
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/dec/11/hanukkah-celebrations-set-amid-security-concerns/
GIST	<p>The eight nights of Hanukkah begin at sundown Tuesday with public menorah lightings scheduled in the District and across the country, as Jewish groups say they have taken steps to ensure a peaceful holiday.</p> <p>“There are always security concerns and Reform Jewish congregations are prepared,” Amy Asin, vice president for the Union of Reform Judaism, said in an email to The Washington Times.</p> <p>“Hanukkah is largely celebrated in people’s homes. So while many congregations will have a celebration, the night and the size of the crowd is likely not different from other ongoing celebrations,” Ms. Asin said.</p> <p>At the White House, the first menorah candle was lit Thursday, one day after President Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and announced plans to move the U.S. Embassy there.</p> <p>On Tuesday evening, the Orthodox group American Friends of Lubavitch will lead the annual National Menorah Lighting Ceremony on the Ellipse, which typically draws thousands of spectators each year.</p> <p>Rabbi Menachem Shemtov said the Jewish group has taken necessary precautions but has no reason to believe the event will be anything other than fun.</p> <p>“There’s hot latkes, there’s doughnuts, there’s chocolate gelt [coins], there’s all the fun,” Rabbi Shemtov said.</p> <p>“Hanukkah is basically the victory of religious freedom over oppression, so being able to celebrate this huge concept in front of, perhaps, the biggest stage in the world is a great opportunity,” he said.</p> <p>Doron Ezickson, the D.C. regional director for the Anti-Defamation League, said that while security is always a concern for the Jewish community, “there’s no indication of any imminent threat.”</p> <p>“The anti-Semitic attacks overseas and the terror attack at the Port Authority Bus Terminal are a reminder that we must always be vigilant when it comes to security,” he said in an email to The Times.</p> <p>New York City has the country’s largest Jewish population and boasts the world’s largest menorah. At 32 feet tall and, the two-ton Grand Army Plaza menorah stands across from the Plaza Hotel at the Fifth Avenue and 59th Street. And a competing menorah will be lit Tuesday in Prospect Park below the Brooklyn Bridge.</p> <p>Meanwhile in South Dakota, Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz will crisscross the state for Hanukkah ceremonies in the state’s capital of Pierre, an Air Force base and even Mount Rushmore.</p> <p>“Our Founding Fathers established this country giving everybody the freedom of religion and all those</p>

opportunities, and I felt there's no better place to express that than in front of the memorial at Mount Rushmore with the menorah lighting," Rabbi Alperowitz told The Times.

He said he's never personally experienced anti-Semitism but that local law enforcement has offered its full support.

"Overall, we feel very safe and we're very thankful for local authorities for everything that they've done for us here as well," Rabbi Alperowitz said.

The celebration of Hanukkah represents the miracle of eight days of candlelight in the Jewish Temple from a source of oil only meant to last one night. Since the holiday is recorded in historical accounts but not the Bible, it's sometimes referred to as a minor Jewish celebration. It is popular for its festive atmosphere and traditions.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Climate change to blame in Calif. wildfires?
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SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/dec/11/california-wildfires-new-normal-baseless-climate-s/
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GIST	California Gov. Jerry Brown and former Vice President Al Gore lead the list of those blaming climate change for Southern California's devastating wildfires, calling them "the new normal," but others insist the science just isn't there.
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That includes climate scientists such as University of Washington meteorologist Cliff Mass, who moved to extinguish the "now normal" narrative by arguing that the data "strongly suggests there is no credible evidence" that global warming is fueling this fall's California coastal wildfires, and that claims to the contrary are "baseless, if not outright wrong."

"The bottom line of all this is that observations and the best scientific reasoning do NOT suggest that global warming is enhancing CA coastal wildfires through effects on temperature and precipitation," Mr. Mass said Monday in a post on his weather and climate blog.

He and others have pointed to the heavy precipitation earlier this year in California after five years of drought, which resulted in high vegetation growth that feeds the flames.

"The destructive fires in California are not unexpected given the wet winter last year and resultant plant growth, followed by hot and dry weather since then in which the vegetation dried out," University of Colorado Boulder meteorologist Roger A. Pielke Sr. said in an email.

Then there is the human variable. Just as people are responsible for emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, they also are known for setting fires.

"An important issue is the extent humans have deliberately or inadvertently started the fires," Mr. Pielke said. "If these were not started by people (including sparks from power lines), how many fires would there have been naturally? Probably none."

Scientists are rejecting arguments by a rash of politicians and media outlets linking climate change to blazes that have charred more than 256,000 acres so far in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, San Diego and Ventura counties, according to reports from the National Interagency Fire Center.

The largest of the five active wildfires, the Thomas Fire north of Santa Paula, has burned 230,500 acres and destroyed nearly 800 structures as gusty Santa Ana winds push the flames farther west into Santa Barbara County and threaten the towns of Montecito and Summerland, according to state firefighting agency Cal Fire.

Mr. Brown declared Saturday that Californians should expect winter wildfires because of the effects of drought and climate change.

“This is the new normal,” Mr. Brown said at a news conference after surveying damage in Ventura County. “We’re about ready to have firefighting at Christmas. This is very odd and unusual.”

Mr. Gore conveyed the same message last week during his Climate Reality Project’s “24 Hours of Reality,” listing “more destructive and widespread wildfires” as one of the consequences of climate change and specifically the damage caused by the Southern California blazes.

“You know, events like this are now reported daily on the news with a terrifying drumbeat of regularity, the so-called ‘new normal,’ but it’s not normal at all, and we have to speak up and act,” said Mr. Gore.

Fueling the narrative are stories such as those in The New York Times, headlined “In a Warming California, a Future of More Fire,” while InsideClimate News reported “As ‘Epic Winds’ Drive California Fires, Climate Change Fuels the Risk.”

“Southern California fires are destructive and unprecedented — and a sign of things to come,” said an article in the Palm Springs Desert Sun.

“We’ve seen really wet falls and winters lately too, and then we’ve seen really dry ones. And that’s the hallmark pattern you expect to see with climate change,” University of California-Merced fire ecologist LeRoy Westerling told the Desert Sun. “We had a much longer season of high fire risk [this year] because we haven’t gotten the rain.”

The articles cite California’s record summer heat, but Mr. Mass argued that hot weather driven by greenhouse gases would not have made a difference because “grasses, shrubs and other fuels will be dry by the end of summer and during fall, no matter what.”

“So even if the summer/fall temperatures rose and the conditions dried further under global warming, IT WOULD NOT MATTER,” he said. “Without any additional warming, the fuels in late summer and fall are dry enough to burn over coastal California and always have been.”

John Abatzoglou, associate professor of geography and climate at the University of Idaho, said the prolonged Santa Ana winds whipping up the wildfires would not have made news if the rain came first.

Did global warming play a role? “We don’t have any mature science [that I’m aware of] that would implicate climate change as being behind the delay in the autumn rains,” Mr. Abatzoglou said in an email.

“However, the warmer temperatures (including a bump tied to climate change) would play some role in drying fuels out,” he said. “There is some research that suggests that Santa Ana winds events under climate change may bring more extreme drops in humidity, which aid in fire growth.”

At the same time, evidence suggests that wildfires were worse before World War II.

Bjorn Lomborg, president of the Copenhagen Consensus Center, compiled data from 1926-2017 showing that the acreage burned by U.S. wildfires has dropped fourfold since peaking in the 1930s, which was posted on the skeptics’ website Climate Depot.

David B. South, emeritus forestry professor at Auburn University, told the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in 2014 that eight of 10 “extreme megafires” in the lower 48 states since 1850 occurred during cooler-than-average decades.

“These data suggest that extremely large megafires were 4-times more common before 1940 (back when carbon dioxide concentrations were lower than 310 ppmv),” Mr. South said in his written testimony.

“What these graphs suggest is that we cannot reasonably say that anthropogenic global warming causes

	<p>extremely large wildfires.”</p> <p>Mr. Mass pointed to a 2014 research paper in the American Geophysical Union journal showing that major coastal California wildfires have declined since 1984.</p> <p>“Totally consistent with everything I have described above,” Mr. Mass said. “Totally inconsistent with the claims of Governor Brown, some climate activists, and too many media outlets.”</p> <p>If there is any point on which there may be a scientific consensus, it’s that the relationship between Western wildfires and rising greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere is nothing if not complicated.</p> <p>“As to whether this is a ‘new normal,’ it is easy (and inaccurate) to blame climate change just from added CO₂,” said Mr. Pielke, “when in reality the reasons for the fires and the damage they are causing are more complex.”</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/11 Supreme Court declines gay rights case
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/dec/11/supreme-court-declines-settle-gay-rights-employment/
GIST	<p>The Supreme Court announced Monday that it was refusing to take up a case that could have expanded the prohibition on discrimination to include sexual orientation, declining to hear a case brought by a woman against her employer and leaving a legal jumble in place.</p> <p>Federal law doesn’t mention sexual orientation, but some appeals courts have read that language into the law anyway, while others have refused to take that step. That’s created a split where discriminating against gay or lesbian workers is illegal under federal law in some states, but not in others.</p> <p>The justices, without comment, declined to hear one of those cases, in which the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against a lesbian who said she faced discrimination.</p> <p>The woman’s lawyer said the move wasn’t a “no,” but rather a “not yet,” predicting other cases will eventually force the justices to confront the thorny issue.</p> <p>“By declining to hear this case, the Supreme Court is delaying the inevitable and leaving a split in the circuits that will cause confusion across the country,” said Greg Nevins, a lawyer for Lambda Legal representing Jameka Evans.</p> <p>Ms. Evans said she was fired from her security guard job because of her sexual orientation, and sued claiming a violation of federal law which prohibits discrimination against an employee based on race, sex, religion or national origin.</p> <p>The 11th Circuit rejected her claim, saying the law doesn’t explicitly cover orientation. But the 7th Circuit ruled in April that even without explicit language, the law seems broad enough to cover orientation, since it’s essentially the same as sex discrimination.</p> <p>“It is actually impossible to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation without discriminating on the basis of sex,” Chief Judge Diane Wood wrote.</p> <p>The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals is also reviewing the issue.</p> <p>“The public is on the right side of history; it’s unfortunate that the Supreme Court has refused to join us today, but we will continue to invite them to do the right thing and end this hurtful balkanization of the right of LGBT people to be out at work,” Mr. Nevins said.</p>
Return to	

HEADLINE	12/11 De-escalate Washington Initiative 940
SOURCE	http://crosscut.com/2017/12/is-i-940-a-path-to-reducing-police-shootings/
GIST	<p>The police action was tragic, fatal, possibly unnecessary. But was it malicious? Probably not.</p> <p>Take your pick: In Ferguson, Missouri, people rioted in the streets after a grand jury refused to indict the white police officer who had shot and killed a black teenager, Michael Brown. In Baltimore, riots followed the acquittal of police officers charged in the death of Freddie Gray, who had suffered fatal injuries while imprisoned in the back of a police van.</p> <p>Closer to home, many people have seen the dash-cam footage of the Native American carver John T. Williams crossing a street, all by himself, with his carving knife. An officer gets out of his car and orders Williams to stop. Williams, who is deaf, does not. The officer promptly shoots and kills him. The officer — the subject of a scathing report by police brass, who appeared ready to fire him before he resigned — faced no charges.</p> <p>Or take the murkier but more recent fatal shooting of Charleena Lyles, a pregnant, mentally ill mother of three who was killed by two Seattle officers who went to her apartment after she reported a burglary. The officers said she attacked them at close range with two knives. They weren't wearing cameras. A Seattle Police Department review has reportedly found that the officers did nothing wrong. No criminal charges have been filed.</p> <p>And no wonder. Under Washington law, says state Rep. Roger Goodman, D-Kirkland, chair of the House Public Safety Committee, "a prosecutor could not bring charges" in the case.</p> <p>State law — unique in the nation — immunizes police against prosecution unless they have acted with "malice." That makes a conviction virtually impossible to get. In turn, that makes charging an officer an exercise in futility.</p> <p>That could change through an initiative, whose backers said last week they are entering the final stage of a signature-gathering drive.</p> <p>In this year's legislative session, Goodman sponsored a bill that would have enacted the recommendation of a Joint Legislative Task Force on the Use of Deadly Force in Community Policing — which he co-chaired — to scrap the "malice" standard. Legislators and interest-group representatives talked about the bill for months, but ultimately, nothing happened.</p> <p>Will things change now that Democrats control the state Senate, as well as the House and Governor's Mansion? Goodman, who co-chaired the task force, doubts it. "I don't think that [political switch] makes much of a difference on this issue," he says.</p> <p>But Initiative 940 just may. Even before Lyles' death, De-Escalate Washington filed an initiative to the Legislature that would enact the reforms that the lawmakers didn't pass. It would scrap the malice standard and require all officers receive 40 hours of training in de-escalating violent situations and dealing with the mentally ill.</p> <p>The initiative is close to being assured of the 259,622 valid signatures it requires. At a press event last week, backers said they are actually over 280,000 but want to get to 350,000 to assure that the measure meets state requirements. If it does get enough valid signatures by a Dec. 29 deadline, the Legislature has just three choices. It can enact the measure; reject or ignore it — in which case it goes on the ballot; or come up with an alternative — in which case both the De-Escalate Washington and the Legislature's versions go onto the fall general election ballot. Legislators could no longer simply kick the can down the road.</p>

Goodman says he fears that if I-940 gets enough signatures, its backers will be in advocacy mode, not in any mood to negotiate solutions to technical problems or achieve consensus. But Riall Johnson, the former NFL linebacker who serves as campaign manager for De-Escalate Washington, says that when I-940 gets enough signatures to go before the Legislature, the next step will be negotiation.

How about Goodman's observation that negotiation stalled last session because the police groups never presented a unified position? "That was without an initiative [putting pressure on them]," Johnson says. "Now something has to be either voted on or punted to the ballot — I don't care either way as long as this bill passes. It will be up to them on how soon it does. We have asked police unions to provide solutions as well and they never come up with anything workable." (I left messages with a couple of police organization in the course of researching this article. No one got back to me.)

No one says that training is a bad idea. During the recent election for King County Sheriff, the winning candidate, Mitzi Johanknecht, said in her voters' pamphlet statement that if she were elected, "deputies will receive ongoing de-escalation and anti-bias training, and increased access to less-lethal policing tools. This is why I was the first law enforcement official to endorse I-940." But would expanded training have saved Charleena Lyles? Probably not.

One of the officers who shot Lyles had gone through 40 hours of crisis training, which most SPD officers have received; the other, hired in just 2015, had a basic eight-hour course. But neither were carrying the "less lethal" Tasers, although one had training in Taser usage and was supposed to have one with him. And they might not have used them, anyway. I suggested to I-940's Johnson that if you believe the officers' account of what happened in Lyles' apartment, the measures proposed in I-940 might not have mattered. He made it clear that he couldn't make the leap of faith needed to believe it. Besides, "the officer neglected his training when he left the station by not using the tool [the Taser] he was trained with and required to use," Johnson says.

Unjustified police shootings have been cast as a racial issue but it's not as simple as the prevailing narrative. Although the percentage of black victims is disproportionately high, most people shot by police aren't black. As lawmaker Goodman points out, the greatest correlation with police shootings is not skin color but mental illness. The same is true of homelessness: The largest single group of Washington homeless is the mentally ill.

The state has already lost lawsuits over its treatment of people who are or are suspected to be mentally ill. A federal judge has held the Department of Social and Health Services in contempt for its failure to conduct timely mental health evaluations of prisoners. People with mental health problems crowd the jails. "We ask our law enforcement to solve the mental health problem," Goodman says. The sometimes-fatal confrontations on the street are "a result of our failing to respond to the front end of the problem."

Johnson minimizes the role of mental illness itself, pointing to training as a way to improve police handling of troubled individuals. "There are mental health professionals that deal with these people ... every day and don't manage to shoot them," Johnson says, "We want more of these [professionals'] tactics to be implemented into the [police] training process so they can defuse any tense situation and not escalate. ... It can be done.

More mental health care would, of course, require more money. And that does not seem to be forthcoming any time soon. "This is ultimately a resource issue," Goodman says.

Winston Churchill famously said: "We sleep safely at night because rough men stand ready to visit violence on those who would harm us." At times, the police are those "rough men." But Churchill was talking about the military, not about the then-unarmed British bobbies. The recent militarization of some American police equipment and attitudes has already been much discussed. But cops aren't the military — or at least, they're not supposed to be. And community members, mentally ill or not, aren't the enemy — or at least, they're not supposed to be, either.

In Baltimore, the officers involved in Freddie Gray's death were charged but not convicted. Allegedly, that

experience has made some Baltimore cops unwilling to do their jobs, contributing to that city's horrendous murder rate. Some people fear that if cops here are looking over their shoulders at potential prosecution, they'll be less likely to do their jobs. Whether or not getting rid of the "malice" standard would create this kind of atmosphere is another question.

"We are the only state in the country with this [malice standard]," Johnson says. "I don't hear police in other states asking for this kind of immunity. ... A cop doing his job won't have to worry about being prosecuted. There are situations where shootings are justified, but there are also situations where if police didn't show up, no one would've been killed in the first place."

He adds, "John T. Williams didn't pose a risk to anyone, yet a cop showed up and he ended up dead."

Increasing prosecutions isn't the initiative campaign's goal, Johnson says. "Our campaign would much rather see less shootings than more prosecutions."

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Seattle City Light CEO pay on-par
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/838468/seattle-city-light-ceo-pay/
GIST	<p>It is often pointed out that Seattle City Light's CEO is the highest paid employee in the city, far more than even the mayor.</p> <p>Actually, according to The News Tribune, with a \$322,503 annual salary in 2016 (\$340,000 reported elsewhere), Seattle City Light CEO Larry Weis was the second-highest paid employee at the city. Fire Battalion Chief Richard Schultz pulled in \$360,303.</p> <p>Pay is a consideration as Mayor Jenny Durkan replaces the utility's top executive. While a \$340,000 annual salary, with an 8 percent bonus, may seem high to many, the price tag for the soon-to-exit CEO is on par with his public utility colleagues. And it's far below his counterparts in the private sector.</p> <p>For example, here are a few public utilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chelan County PUD General Manager Steve Wright: \$345,000 annually, with 1-5 percent payment each year he remains with the utility.• City of Richland Energy Services Director Bob Hammond: Between \$9,287.20-13,932.53 monthly salary (up to \$167,190 annually).• Clark Public Utilities CEO Wayne Nelson: \$270,000 annually, with a \$400 monthly car allowance• Snohomish County Public Utility CEO (12th largest public utility in America): \$329,600• Tacoma Public Utilities CEO Bill Gaines (retiring in December): \$387,650 annually (highest paid public employee in Pierce County). <p>If you're in the market for a utility CEO job, however, private companies are the way to go. The jobs may pay around the same six-figure salary as a public utility, but private CEOs also earn considerable bonuses and other equity to push their pay into the millions.</p> <p>Private energy companies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avista Corporation CEO Scott Morris (Spokane): \$3,773,712 total; \$1,883,564 in cash (Morris took home \$5.5 million in 2014).• Eversource Energy CEO James Judge (provides electricity to Massachusetts, Connecticut): \$4,566,520 total; \$3,159,690 cash.• Nextera Energy, Inc. CEO James Robo (various areas in United States): \$16,086,450 total; \$5,032,300 in cash.• PacifiCorp CEO Sefan Bird (Oregon, Washington, California): \$1.1 million total; \$338,000 base pay, with \$738,784 in bonuses.• Portland General Electric CEO James Piro (Portland, Ore): \$3.2 million; \$836,431 base pay with \$680,574 in bonuses; \$41,517,452 in equity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puget Sound Energy CEO Kimberly Harris (Washington state): \$3.8 million; \$900,000 base pay with \$2,885,301 in bonus incentives. <p>Seattle city employee pay Putting the mayor of Seattle aside — with their \$175,000 annual salary — Seattle City Light employees accounted for six of the top 10 most highly paid employees at the city in 2016, according to The News Tribune.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Schultz, Fire Battalion Chief: \$360,303 • Larry Weis, Seattle City Light: \$322,503 • Ricardo Castro, Fire Captain: \$299,019 (base pay is \$291,962) • Michael Yi, City Light: \$289,370 (base pay is \$113,814) • Cao Pham, City Light: \$279,021 (base pay is \$107,522) • Kathleen O’Toole, Seattle Police Chief (resigning at the end of the year): \$273,275 • James Hannigan, City Light: \$266,353 (base pay is \$129,006) • James Baggs, City Light: \$264,586 • Earl Boyd, City Light: \$258,174 (base pay is \$103,863) • James Woodbury, Fire Chief: \$254,605 (base pay is \$165,908) <p>Overtime pay is a considerable portion of city employees’ salaries, which is why many of the highest paid Seattle workers took home far beyond their base pay in 2016.</p> <p>A recent analysis by the Puget Sound Business Journal found that 634 city employees earn more than one-third of their paychecks from overtime. There are 10 workers who get more than half of their pay in overtime, too. Of the 22 city employees who earn more than \$100,000 in overtime, 14 work at City Light.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 SPD: detailed report Lyles shooting
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/841600/seattle-pd-releases-detailed-report-of-charleena-lyles-shooting/
GIST	<p>A newly-released Seattle Police Department report says tasers, pepper spray, and batons weren’t viable options for the two Seattle police officers who fatally shot Charleena Lyles after she pulled a knife on them.</p> <p>Lyles, a 30-year-old African-American mother of four, was shot seven times by two white officers June 18, after she called to report a burglary at her apartment.</p> <p>The Force Review Board report, was made public Friday. According to The Seattle Times, it provides the first detailed analysis of what led to the board’s unanimous vote on Nov. 14; determining the shooting was “reasonable,” “necessary,” “proportional,” and “consistent” with department training and policy.</p> <p>The report was submitted to U.S. District Judge James Robart who requested it. He is the judge weighing the city’s request to find it in full compliance with a 2012 federal consent decree.</p> <p>That decree requires the police department adopt reforms to address excessive force and biased policing.</p>
Return to Top	Click on link to download PDF: Seattle PD Force Review Board Findings http://spdblotter.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/SPD-Force-Review-Board-Officer-Involved-Shooting.pdf

HEADLINE	12/11 Seattle ‘sweeps’ unconstitutional?
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/841405/are-homeless-sweeps-unconstitutional/
GIST	There are more than 11,000 homeless people in Seattle and King County, and the state of emergency surrounding the city’s homeless crisis was a focal point of this year’s mayoral race.

While Mayor Jenny Durkan, who assumed office after winning the election in November, is in favor of police “sweeps” of homeless encampments, former candidate Nikkita Oliver believes such sweeps are inhumane. She joined Dave Ross and Colleen O’Brien on KIRO Radio to talk about better solutions.

The population of homeless people in the U.S. increased for the first time in seven years, according to a new federal report released last week. King County’s homeless population now ranks third in the nation – trailing only Los Angeles and New York City. Sweeps are one way the city has chosen to address the crisis of homelessness.

“There are very clear ways in which these sweeps violate the constitutional rights of those who are camping,” Oliver said during an interview with Seattle’s Morning News. During these “sweeps,” city officials give residents of an unauthorized encampment 72 hours’ notice before completely clearing out the campsite.

Oliver explained that the laws are overly broad and campers are sometimes not offered the full 72 hours required to evacuate if police or the city’s Navigation Team determine an “emergency” situation necessitates the sweep.

“There’s also supposed to be constitutional protections around the property of those who are living in the encampments, who are experiencing these sweeps. And oftentimes their property is destroyed, or not collected or retrieved in a way that they can find it later, and so the sweeps are not only unconstitutional but in a lot of ways they’re inhumane.”

Earlier this year, former Mayor Ed Murray announced the creation of the Navigation Team, which would aim to help people dislocated after camp sweeps find shelter solutions. However, Oliver argues these efforts are ultimately flawed because the city doesn’t have enough shelter space for its homeless population.

What goes on during a sweep?

Dave and Colleen were also joined by a camper who was forced to abandon a Ravenna-area site during a recent sweep.

“They pretty much show up and take pictures one day, and then come out the next day and put up a piece of paper that tells you they’re going to come and take everything down,” he said of the process. “They give you 72 hours, and then they show up 72 hours later and whatever you don’t have normally, they just kind of chew you off and destroy all your stuff.”

And by that, the camper literally means “destroy” – officials will bulldoze a structure and clear out debris. But the process can be disruptive for small communities of homeless people who are otherwise self-sustaining.

“Our area was clean, and they just literally strewn everything that was in our structure ... to where it just looked like a big trash pile,” the camper said. “It’s really inhumane, especially on Christmas, to take everything from someone who’s already had everything taken. Kind of kick them while they’re down. (I am) just wishing I could move back to that spot or be told where I can go.”

Still, others argue that the sweeps can constitute a violation of property rights (when officers seize, destroy, or search tents and belongings), which was the subject of a lawsuit earlier this year.

If sweeps aren’t the answer, what is?

For his part, the homeless camper believes the city could designate greenbelts and out-of-sight areas for camps, so that homeless people can find shelter there without fear of being evicted.

Oliver argues that the city can be smarter about the way it uses homeless funds.

“It’s going to be on our public officials to draw some hard lines in the sand and say that we value the health of our city,” Oliver said, “and those who are living in encampments are a part of our city. So, we’re going to pour resources into human services and to developing shelters and affordable housing as a way of ensuring that everyone has a right to stay here and be healthy.”

“... We need to be finding humane ways of ensuring that people have safe places to be and sleep. The city has not effectively done that; its answer has been to sweep people around the city as opposed to providing multiple spaces where people can safely live ... And people are self-managing — they’re managing their own spaces and ensuring that they’re safe. And they just want a safe space to live and be.”

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Seattle imposes new limits on Airbnb
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/seattle-imposes-new-limits-on-airbnb-other-short-term-rentals-with-7-0-council-vote/
GIST	<p>By limiting the number of homes that property owners can operate as short-term rentals for visitors, can Seattle preserve its housing stock for locals?</p> <p>The City Council decided to try the strategy Monday, voting 7-0 to enact new regulations for short-term rentals, including those listed on platforms such as Airbnb and HomeAway.</p> <p>Council members said they want to rein in a rapidly growing industry that caters to tourists and other out-of-towners looking for alternatives to hotels.</p> <p>With rents and home prices rising and affordable housing in short supply, Seattle can’t afford to lose permanent units, council members said.</p> <p>“I’m proud of where we’ve gone today,” Councilmember Mike O’Brien said. “I think we’ve created a path for people to continue to operate successful businesses. There will be some changes, for sure, and I think those changes overall will be better for the community.”</p> <p>The regulations, which will take effect on Jan. 1, 2019, will require all operators of short-term rentals to obtain licenses and will limit new operators to listing their primary residence and one additional unit. Existing operators across most of the city will be limited to renting out two units (three if adding their primary residence at a later date).</p> <p>Only existing operators with short-term rentals in the downtown core and in small buildings constructed after 2012 on First Hill and Capitol Hill will be grandfathered in. They’ll be allowed to continue listing as many units as they do now, plus their primary residence and one additional unit.</p> <p>The new limits won’t affect mom-and-pop operators using their own homes to make ends meet, council members said. They said the limits are meant to prevent business people from taking large numbers of units off the housing market and from converting neighborhood apartment buildings into de-facto hotels.</p> <p>The regulations, which Seattle officials began working on about two years ago, garnered support Monday from a variety of interested parties.</p> <p>Representatives for Puget Sound Sage, a nonprofit organization concerned about short-term rentals contributing to gentrification, urged the council to take action.</p> <p>The city has lost more than 2,000 housing units to the short-term rental market in recent years, according to the organization. People of color are hurt the most and benefit the least because they’re less likely to own property, said Yolanda Matthews, an organizer with the group.</p>

	Though online platforms are challenging the traditional hospitality industry, both Airbnb and the Seattle Hotel Association praised the regulations.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/12 NKorea: matchless nuclear weapons state
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2017/12/12/N-Korea-says-it-is-now-a-matchless-nuclear-weapons-state/6861513052866/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=ts_tn_int&utm_medium=5
GIST	<p>SEOUL, South Korea, Dec. 11 (UPI) -- North Korea says it has become "a matchless nuclear weapons state" headed for a victory over the United States, according to its state-run media on Tuesday.</p> <p>The Korea Central News Agency released an English report on the Eighth Conference of Munitions Industry held Monday in Pyongyang where officials reviewed the progress and achievements of the state's arms development.</p> <p>It is the first time that the North has revealed details of its military arms conference, an official from Seoul's Unification Ministry told reporters on Tuesday.</p> <p>The meeting was attended by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, Vice Chairman of the Workers' Party's central committee Thae Jong Su, along with those who contributed to the recent launch of the Hwasong-15 ICBM, according to the KCNA report.</p> <p>Vice Chairman Thae delivered a presentation, lauding what he called a breakthrough in the "development of strategic weapons, having researched and completed the production of cutting-edge technologies and materials which had been the exclusive property of countries claiming to be military powers in the rocket sector."</p> <p>Thae claimed that Pukgusong missiles could deliver strategic nuclear strikes on land and in water, while the Hwasong-12 could target the entire Pacific region and that the Hwasong-14 missile could fire a hydrogen bomb at the heart of the U.S.. He described the recently launched Hwasong-15 intercontinental ballistic missile's capability to target the entire U.S. mainland by attaching a massive nuclear warhead.</p> <p>He said Kim's leadership had enabled the expansion of nuclear capacity, and the "historic turning point in putting the DPRK (North Korea) on the position of a matchless nuclear weapons state and hastening the final victory in the showdown with the U.S."</p> <p>The KCNA report didn't specify whether the North Korean leader had spoken at the assembly. However, it stated the "conference continues," leading to speculation that Kim's remarks could soon be published if the conference resumes.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/12 Cost fighting Calif. wildfires nearing \$40M
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2017/12/12/The-cost-of-fighting-all-6-major-SoCal-fires-now-nearly-40M/5741513079127/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=ts_tn_us&utm_medium=1
GIST	<p>Dec. 12 (UPI) -- Six major wildfires continue to destroy thousands of acres across Southern California -- and the cost of fighting them is running into the tens of millions.</p> <p>The largest, the Thomas Fire, is at nearly 232,000 acres, officials said late Monday -- and it now ranks as the fifth largest in California history. The blaze started in Ventura County a week ago and has burned its way to Santa Barbara County.</p> <p>Officials said containment was at about 20 percent Monday night.</p>

<p>Return to Top</p>	<p>Costs of fighting all six major fires have risen to nearly \$40 million, officials said. More than 9,500 firefighters from Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington state are working the flames, with 7,000 of those on the Thomas Fire alone.</p> <p>In addition to the 1,000-plus structures destroyed, hundreds of homes have been torched, almost 100,000 people have been evacuated, 85,000 have been left without power and damages total about \$10 billion.</p> <p>Rich Macklin, Ventura County Fire Department spokesman, said the massive blaze is exhausting fire crews, with "hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of men and women with packs on their backs, squirting the hills, putting the wet stuff on the red stuff."</p> <p>Rough terrain has also complicated matters, officials said, as it's made getting crews on the ground to attack the front lines of the fire difficult.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/12 UN: sanctions could hurt NKorea people
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/12/asia/north-korea-un-sanctions-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)As frigid winter weather sweeps over the Korean Peninsula, the United Nations has warned that punitive sanctions on North Korea could have unintended consequences for the country's long-suffering civilian population.</p> <p>"The humanitarian assistance provided by the UN agencies and others is literally a lifeline for some 13 million acutely vulnerable individuals, but sanctions may be adversely affecting this essential help," said Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the UN's top human rights official.</p> <p>Speaking Monday via teleconference before a UN Security Council meeting on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), North Korea's official name, Zeid said heightened tensions over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs have led to worsening conditions for those living under the regime of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.</p> <p>North Korea's mission to the UN issued a statement Monday denying human rights were an issue inside the country.</p> <p>"The Security Council has been degraded to a tool controlled by the grip of the US," the statement said. "Their despicable plot cannot frighten the DPRK."</p> <p>North Korea has for years been accused of ignoring the plight of its citizens. A famine in the 1990s -- which historians attribute to agronomic issues and poor central planning, among other factors -- took the lives of an estimated 2.5 million people.</p> <p>Today, 70% of North Korea's 25.1 million people are considered "food insecure" by the World Food Programme. Recent flooding and the potential for a historic drought, which the UN warned of this year, could further imperil food supplies.</p> <p>A failing public distribution system, corruption and the diversion of Pyongyang's limited resources to its military have made life particularly difficult for those outside the showcase capital of Pyongyang, Zeid said.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/12 Group: EU complicit in Libya abuse
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/12/europe/amnesty-international-libya-migrant-report-intl/index.html
GIST	(CNN)Amnesty International has accused European governments of being complicit in the torture and

abuse of migrants and refugees in Libya.

In a new report, the human rights group criticizes European governments for supporting efforts by the Libyan coastguard to prevent migrants crossing the Mediterranean and returning them camps in Libya.

"Hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants trapped in Libya are at the mercy of Libyan authorities, militias, armed groups and smugglers often working seamlessly together for financial gain. Tens of thousands are kept indefinitely in overcrowded detention centers where they are subjected to systematic abuse," said John Dalhuisen, Amnesty International's Europe Director.

"European governments have not just been fully aware of these abuses; by actively supporting the Libyan authorities in stopping sea crossings and containing people in Libya, they are complicit in these abuses."

CNN has exposed the conditions faced by mainly sub-Saharan Africans in Libya, secretly filming a slave auction there.

Dalhuisen called on European governments to rethink their policies and help people reach Europe legally, "including by resettling tens of thousands of refugees."

"They must insist that the Libyan authorities end the policy and practice of arbitrary arrests and detention of refugees and migrants, immediately release all foreign nationals held in the detention centres," he said.

The Amnesty report also accused the Libyan coastguard of endangering migrants' lives and of intimidating NGOs operating in the Mediterranean on rescue missions.

Human-trafficking networks have spread in Libya following the NATO-backed overthrow of Moammar Gadhafi in 2011.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/12 Latest developments in Calif. wildfires
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/12/us/california-fires/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)Thousands of firefighters are making headway against the vast Thomas Fire burning in Southern California, expressing hope that conditions are becoming more favorable.</p> <p>The blaze is larger than all of New York City and was about 20% contained as of Monday evening, according to the fire protection agency CAL FIRE.</p> <p>The wind was cooperating with firefighters Monday and pushing the fire away from nearby communities, Santa Barbara County fire spokesman Mike Eliason told CNN. The breeze had also cleared the air somewhat, leading to improved visibility for fire crews.</p> <p>"It's still not great. It's bad, but it's a better bad," Eliason said, warning that there was a fine line between winds helping firefighting efforts.</p> <p>"You want the breeze to clear the air, but you don't want the breeze to fuel the fire," he said. "Hope springs eternal. Every day we're going to hope that this progressing and getting closer and closer of being put to bed. But right now we're going to need some rain and the long range forecast doesn't show that."</p> <p>The Thomas Fire is only one of six major wildfires torching the state. In total, the fires have destroyed more than 1,000 structures since igniting last week.</p> <p>The blazes vary in size. Together, they are larger than the areas of New York City and Boston combined, or bigger than the area of Singapore.</p>

Latest developments

Making history: At more than 230,000 acres in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, the Thomas Fire is now [the fifth largest wildfire in modern California history](#).

Elevated conditions: Fire conditions are much better than over the weekend, but winds will continue to be a bit breezy at 20 to 40 mph through the middle of the week, according to CNN meteorologist Taylor Ward. Ventura County and surrounding areas are under an elevated fire outlook through Tuesday. Temperatures will remain in the upper 70s and low 80s for the week, as humidity remains low.

Warnings: A "red flag warning" for Los Angeles and Ventura counties has been extended into Wednesday evening, the National Weather Service said. That means elevated fire weather conditions are expected due to gusty winds and low humidity.

Evacuations: Some 93,243 people were under mandatory evacuation orders in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties Monday afternoon, county fire officials said.

Death toll: The death toll from the Thomas Fire stands at one. Authorities believe Virginia Pesola, 70, of Santa Paula, died in a crash while fleeing the fire. Her body was found Wednesday.

Firefighters tested

Santa Barbara County Fire's Mike Eliason said firefighters were working 24 or 36 hour shifts, typically on two week rotations. Their priorities were saving lives first, then property and then the environment, he said.

"This is the job they all signed up for, so they're all aware of what can happen and how the job can go. I think spirits are good, they've made some saves. I think they realize they have a mission here and a job and they're really working hard," Eliason said.

Limited visibility had made it difficult to tackle the blaze.

"This poor visibility has really hindered the fixed wing aircraft because they can't maneuver in these canyons if you can't see where you're going, so we've been forced to use helicopters that have been pounding it with gallons and gallons and gallons of water," he said.

The onshore winds were also pushing the fire back up into the canyon. "The longer the fire burns uphill, the bigger the burned area is going to be (behind it) so when the wind does shift, it's not going to have anywhere to burn back down into the community," he said.

While the outlook was looking more positive, Eliason said he expected the fire to burn for another couple of weeks at least.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/12 Homeless in Rio skyrockets; violence up
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/homeless-rio-skyrockets-creating-tensions-violence-51731992?
GIST	<p>A year after Rio de Janeiro hosted the Olympic Games, a grinding economic crisis has led to an influx of thousands of homeless people, creating a climate of tension that city officials are scrambling to address.</p> <p>Warm temperatures and miles of beaches have long made Brazil's most famous city a place with a large street population. But city officials say it's more than tripled in the last few years, to an estimated 15,000 people.</p>

While many U.S. cities have experienced sharp increases in people living outdoors thanks to rising housing prices amid a recovering economy, in Rio the driving factors have been fallout from Brazil's worst recession in decades and long-standing inequalities.

Today's homeless in Rio include thousands who came from other states for work before the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Rio Olympics and subsequently lost their jobs.

"Rio de Janeiro is facing the worst possible scenario when it comes to the homeless," said Pedro Fernandes, the city's secretary of social assistance and human rights. "We have never had such a large number in the streets."

Tensions have been steadily increasing, particularly in affluent and touristy neighborhoods where residents and businesses are frustrated with the throngs of people sleeping on the streets. In August, a residential building in the iconic Copacabana neighborhood installed sprinklers below its awnings to rouse unwanted campers below. The city later forced the sprinklers to be removed.

People in several affluent neighborhoods post messages on community Facebook groups urging police to act and imploring neighbors not to feed the homeless.

In some cases, violence has erupted. Forty-year-old Fernanda Rodrigues dos Santos was fatally shot in the chest while sleeping in the street in Copacabana in October. Police say 24-year-old Rodrigo Gomes Rodrigues, a medical student who lives in the neighborhood, has confessed to the killing. Police say he and a friend argued earlier in the night with another homeless person, went to get a gun and returned looking for revenge.

Carla Beatriz Nunes Maia, from the Public Prosecutors office, has been leading visits to the homeless at night to get a sense of what they are facing. She says complaints about rough-handed tactics by police have given way to even more complaints about friction with residents in affluent neighborhoods.

"There is a repressive movement to keep people from helping the homeless," said Maia, referring to the calls on social media not to give food or money.

The city has launched an initiative to spruce up shelters and persuade more homeless people to use them. Many shun shelters because they often have strict rules and, by the city's own acknowledgement, have fallen into disrepair, with infestations of bugs and filthy bathrooms.

While some of the nearly 2,200 beds in shelters go empty each night, successfully persuading more homeless people to use them could create its own problems, as there are vastly more potential users than space for them. Given that reality, the city is also working to help migrants return to their home states, and in some cases even other countries.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/12 Strong quake rocks southern Iran
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iran-state-tv-62-magnitude-earthquake-rocks-southern-51733860?
GIST	<p>Iran's state TV says that a magnitude 6.2 earthquake has jolted the country's southern province of Kerman.</p> <p>The report says the temblor rocked the village of Hajdak, about 700 kilometers, or 400 miles, south of Tehran on Tuesday. It says the quake's depth was 10 kilometers, or 6.2 miles. There were no immediate reports of casualties or major damage.</p> <p>The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake's magnitude was 5.9.</p> <p>In November, a 7.2 magnitude quake hit western Iran, killing more than 600 people.</p>

	Iran is prone to near-daily earthquakes as it sits on major fault lines. In 2003, a 6.6 magnitude quake flattened the historic city of Bam, killing 26,000 people.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/12 Severe winter storm hits France
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/thousands-power-storm-ana-hit-france-51733781
GIST	<p>About 36,000 households across France are still without power after Storm Ana hit the country.</p> <p>Enedis, the body in charge of France's electricity network, said in a statement Tuesday that more than 1,500 agents are being deployed to help restore power.</p> <p>Strong winds and heavy rainfall wreaked havoc with transportation in various parts of the country Monday. Northern France was the region most affected by the snow and wintry weather, with 20,000 homes without electricity.</p> <p>The national meteorological service, Meteo France, said the worst of the bad weather should be over soon, but still warned of a high risk of avalanches in the southern Alps.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Huge Calif. wildfire continues to grow
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/massive-california-wildfire-now-largest-states-history/story?
GIST	<p>The Thomas fire, the worst of five wildfires currently burning in California, grew by more than 50,000 acres on Sunday, making it the fifth-largest wildfire in the state's history, fire officials said.</p> <p>The inferno, just north of Los Angeles in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, is being fought by about 6,400 firefighters.</p> <p>It's been a witch's brew fueled by plenty of vegetation and worsened by powerful Santa Ana winds and the region's extremely warm weather and dry conditions.</p> <p>So far, officials estimate the Thomas fire has charred about 231,700 acres. It has consumed 794 structures and damaged about 190 others, with 18,000 buildings still at risk.</p> <p>The blaze, which has burned wildly for a week, has prompted the evacuation of tens of thousands of residents.</p> <p>In Santa Barbara County alone, more than 30,000 residents were forced from their homes under evacuation warnings.</p> <p>Perhaps most critical is that the Santa Ana winds persist, keeping firefighters struggling with gusts of 35 to 45 mph, Cal Fire officials confirmed.</p> <p>However, in a promising turn, despite the fire's perimeter spreading over the weekend, the Thomas fire is now up to 20 percent contained -- up from Sunday evening.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Protestors lock selves to PSE crane
SOURCE	http://komonews.com/news/local/protesters-lock-selves-to-crane-at-pse-gas-facility-construction-site
GIST	TACOMA, Wash. - Two protesters have locked themselves to a crane and unfurled a banner Monday at

the site of an 8 million-gallon liquefied natural gas storage facility under construction at the Port of Tacoma.

The activists say they are trying to halt construction of the Puget Sound Energy facility, which they believe will pose a danger to the region and to the global climate once it is built and in use.

Supporters of the protesters say the pair kayaked into the plant early Monday morning, climbed up the construction crane and tied themselves to it.

A rescue team of firefighters attempted to bring the protesters down from the crane, but were unsuccessful and have suspended their efforts for the time being. Tacoma police also responded but no arrests have made so far.

Stephen Way, one of the two protesters locked to the crane, says PSE lacks all the essential permits to build the facility, but has continued with construction anyway.

"If I tried to build an addition to my house without permits, the city of Tacoma would make me stop, and might require me to undo the work done. If a powerful corporation like PSE can get away with what is happening here, then the community has to take a stand," he said in a prepared statement.

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency earlier issued a notice of violation against the construction project following a stop work request by the Puyallup Tribe, which owns land adjacent to the gas storage facility.

But a spokesperson for the Clean Air Agency said the notice of violation does not require PSE to stop work on the plant. Instead, it requires the utility to submit a complete application for its air permit. PSE has now submitted a complete application and the Clean Air Agency is reviewing it.

The spokesperson said a civil penalty may eventually be assessed against PSE for starting construction before receiving a permit.

PSE says the liquefied gas storage facility will provide a cleaner type of fuel.

But opponents of the facility say it is a potential explosion hazard, risks polluting local air and water and adds to the threats posed by climate change.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Wildfire smoke drifts into Seattle again
SOURCE	http://www.kiro7.com/news/local/the-haze-just-cant-stay-away-wildfire-smoke-drifts-into-seattle-again/662427837
GIST	<p>Seattle's been hit hard this year by hovering wildfire smoke.</p> <p>Over the summer, smoke from British Columbia and Oregon made the air quality in the Puget Sound some of the worst in the United States. Ash fell on vehicles in places across Western Washington in early September.</p> <p>And it's happening again, this time with smoke drifting into the Northwest from California wildfires. Though not as intense as the summer's haze, the smoke over the late fall weekend left a yellowish cast over the city.</p> <p>A destructive Southern California wildfire exploded in size over the weekend, becoming the fifth largest in state history. The blaze broke out a week ago in Ventura County.</p> <p>It's usually not this dry in California this time of year. Usually, there is enough rainfall, that vegetation wouldn't be bone dry. But strong winds during late fall in Southern California are normal.</p>

	<p>And over the weekend, smoke from that fire drifted into Seattle.</p> <p>"We have a combination of already stagnant air because of the temperature inversion and now the added smoke and haze from the California wildfires," KIRO 7 PinPoint Meteorologist Nick Allard said.</p> <p>Temperature inversion is when a warmer layer of air stays above cool air and pollution trapped at the surface.</p> <p>"As of right now [Monday afternoon] the Air Stagnation issue will be a problem through at least Thursday before we see some rain return on Friday. Expect air quality in the moderate to unhealthy range, which is a problem for people with respiratory issues"</p> <p>What else should I know about the air quality?</p> <p>The smoke in Seattle partially resulted in an Air Stagnation Advisory and burn ban in King County. The burn ban has since been lifted. The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency says air quality is continuing to deteriorate across the Puget Sound region.</p> <p>A high-pressure system remains over Western Washington, causing cold and calm weather conditions and preventing wind from blowing away air pollution.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/11 NASA to send astronauts back to moon
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2017/12/11/Trump-orders-NASA-to-send-US-astronauts-back-to-moon/8551513018655/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=lh&utm_medium=1
GIST	<p>Dec. 11 (UPI) -- President Donald Trump on Monday signed a directive to send U.S. astronauts back to the moon, an order he said would restore American leadership in space.</p> <p>The directive comes on the 45th anniversary of the day Apollo 17 put the last U.S. astronauts on the moon.</p> <p>Trump's directive ordered NASA to send U.S. astronauts back to the moon for the first time since 1972 and establish eventual travel to Mars.</p> <p>"This time we will not only plant our flag and leave our footprint, we will establish a foundation for an eventual mission to Mars and perhaps, someday, to many worlds beyond," he said. "This directive will ensure America's space program once again leads and inspires all of humanity."</p> <p>Trump also praised the order because "it also happens to mean jobs."</p> <p>The White House said the United States would work with international partners and private companies to reach the moon and Mars.</p> <p>"This is a giant step toward inspiring that future," he said. "We are the leader and we are going to stay the leader."</p> <p>The National Space Council, headed by Vice President Mike Pence, recommended the action to Trump. Pence said Monday the order will lead to a "renewed American presence on the moon."</p> <p>"We will also spur innovation as the space program has always done," the vice president said.</p> <p>The president resurrected the National Space Council in June, 24 years after it disbanded. President George H.W. Bush created the panel in 1989.</p>
Return to	

HEADLINE	12/11 Firefighters battle fatigue in California
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-wildfires/california-wildfire-rages-threatens-communities-idUSKBN1E5147
GIST	<p>VENTURA, Calif. (Reuters) - Crews battling a massive wind-driven California wildfire that has torched nearly 1,000 buildings and charred an area larger than New York City on Monday struggled to protect communities menaced by flames along the state's scenic coastline.</p> <p>The Thomas Fire ignited a week ago and has burned 230,500 acres in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, about 100 miles northwest of Los Angeles.</p> <p>"Severe fire weather will continue to promote significant fire growth" into Santa Barbara County and threaten the communities of Montecito and Summerland, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) said in a Monday morning update.</p> <p>Santa Ana winds and the rugged mountainous terrain have hindered firefighters as they battle the blaze, which has destroyed or damaged 981 houses, outbuildings and other structures and left 90,000 homes and businesses without power.</p> <p>"A lot of these guys (firefighters) have fought a lot of fires in the past few months and are fatigued," said Fire Captain Steve Concialdi, spokesman for the Thomas Fire, on Sunday.</p> <p>The fire as of Monday morning was 15 percent contained, up from 10 percent on Sunday night. It was at 15 percent contained Saturday. The Thomas Fire grew on Sunday by 56,000 acres in one day and made a run of 7 miles, Concialdi said.</p> <p>Nearly 6,397 firefighting personnel from 11 states are working on the blaze, Cal Fire said. The cost of fighting the fire as of Monday morning was more than \$38 million, the agency added. It is already the fifth-largest wildfire on record in California.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Hezbollah chief vows focus on Israel
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/hezbollah-holds-mass-rally-support-palestinians-51717473?
GIST	<p>Tens of thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians attended a Hezbollah rally in Beirut on Monday, where the militant group's leader vowed to return its focus to Israel after years of fighting in Syria's civil war.</p> <p>Chanting "Oh America, you are the Great Satan," while pumping their fists in the air, men, women and children marched through streets of Hezbollah's southern Beirut stronghold carrying Lebanese and Palestinian flags, as well as the militant group's yellow banners.</p> <p>At the rally, called to protest U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said he hoped the "foolish decision" would mark the "beginning of the end" of the Jewish state.</p> <p>Nasrallah said his group is almost done fighting extremists elsewhere in the region, and will now "give all its time" to Jerusalem and the Palestinians. "Death to Israel!" he said in the fiery address, which was broadcast from an undisclosed location and shown on big screens at the rally.</p> <p>Hezbollah forced Israeli troops out of southern Lebanon in 2000, and the group battled Israel to a bloody stalemate six years later. The Iranian-backed militant group is believed to have a massive arsenal of rockets capable of hitting much of Israel's territory, and its battle-hardened fighters played a key role in</p>

	<p>turning the tide of Syria's civil war in favor of President Bashar Assad.</p> <p>Nasrallah called on Palestinian armed groups and others in the region to come up with "unified strategy" to confront Trump's decision. He said Palestinian and Arab leaders should halt all negotiations with Israel, and called for a boycott of the Jewish state.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/11 UN promises justice in Congo assault
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/promises-justice-congo-peacekeeper-attacks-51716367?
GIST	<p>The bodies of 15 United Nations peacekeepers killed last week in eastern Congo arrived home in Tanzania on Monday, as a U.N. official vowed military offenses will be launched against rebels who carried out the attack.</p> <p>The bodies were received in the commercial hub of Dar es Salaam by Tanzanian defense and military officials. The killings shocked many in this East African country that is known for its relative stability in a region often wracked by violence.</p> <p>In a memorial ceremony Monday David Gressly, the U.N. deputy special representative for Congo, said those who staged the assault, which wounded 50 others, will pay for their actions.</p> <p>The Dec. 7 attack about 45 kilometers (28 miles) from Beni was the deadliest single attack on a U.N. peacekeeping mission in nearly 25 years.</p> <p>At least five Congolese soldiers also were killed in the attack. The peacekeeping base has been repeatedly attacked by rebels from the Allied Democratic Forces group.</p> <p>Tanzania's ambassador in Congo, Paul Ignace Mella, called on the U.N. to protect its peacekeeping soldiers. The U.N. peacekeeping mission in Congo is the largest in the world.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/11 Putin criticizes US on Jerusalem move
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/latest-putin-criticizes-us-move-jerusalem-51723421?cid=clicksource_76_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>Russian President Vladimir Putin has criticized the U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, warning that it could destabilize the region and derail the Middle East peace process.</p> <p>Speaking Monday after a hectic day that took him from a Russian base in Syria to Cairo and Ankara, Putin said the U.S. move "doesn't help the Mideast settlement and, just the other way round, destabilizes the already difficult situation in the region."</p> <p>The Russian leader added that it may "finish prospects for the Palestinian-Israeli peace process."</p> <p>He added that Moscow believes that the status of Jerusalem should be settled through talks between the Palestinians and Israel in line with United Nations resolutions.</p> <p>The Palestinians claim east Jerusalem as the capital of their future state.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/11 UN envoy visits Puerto Rico to assess
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SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/visits-puerto-rico-assess-hurricane-victims-51720903?cid=clicksource_76_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>A United Nations expert on extreme poverty and human rights met Monday with hurricane victims in Puerto Rico as complaints grow about the U.S. government's response to a Category 4 storm.</p> <p>U.N. envoy Philip Alston toured one of the hardest hit areas in the capital of San Juan, marking the first time such an envoy has visited the U.S. territory in recent history.</p> <p>Alston told The Associated Press that there is a disproportionate number of Puerto Ricans living in poverty and that he's trying to assess, among other things, the effectiveness of measures taken by the federal government after the storm hit on Sept. 20, killing dozens of people and destroying tens of thousands of homes. Ten of the island's 78 municipalities are still without power, and thousands of businesses remain closed.</p> <p>"I've visited areas that are still completely without power. I've seen areas that have lots of damage that hasn't been removed, and that must be very distressing after three months," he said.</p> <p>He walked past homes with no roofs and a woman still washing sheets by hand three months after Hurricane Maria hit, raising hopes that his visit could help speed up the long recovery process.</p> <p>Roughly 45 percent of Puerto Rico's 3.4 million people were already living below the poverty line before the hurricane hit.</p> <p>Alston said he was impressed how local nonprofit organizations have helped Puerto Ricans recover from the storm, adding that one of the challenges is how the government can harness their power.</p> <p>"There is more resiliency and potential self-sufficiency here than has been acknowledged," he said.</p> <p>Alston declined further comment, noting that he will present a full report of his observations and a list of priorities on Friday following a two-week trip that also included visits to several U.S. states.</p> <p>"There are a number of issues I want to take up," he said.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Court: transgender can enlist in military
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/11/politics/us-pentagon-transgender-enlist/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)A federal judge on Monday declined the US government's request to put on hold an order allowing transgender individuals to join the military beginning in January. The decision means transgender people will be free to enlist in the new year.</p> <p>"In sum, having carefully considered all of the evidence before it, the Court is not persuaded that Defendants will be irreparably injured by allowing the accession of transgender individuals into the military beginning on January 1, 2018," Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly said in her ruling.</p> <p>The Pentagon said it was already following a court ruling last week and is "planning to prepare to access transgender persons," as of January 1, US Army Maj. Dave Eastburn, a Pentagon spokesman said in a written statement following the ruling.</p> <p>White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said the Department of Justice is "reviewing the legal options" on court ruling on transgender Americans serving in the military.</p> <p>"They are simply complying with a court order and preparing to implement a previous policy to remain in compliance. The Department of Justice is currently reviewing the legal options to ensure that he President's directive can be implemented," Sanders said.</p>

Last week the Pentagon said it had established a panel of experts to propose recommendations on the issue of accepting transgender recruits following a series of ruling in federal court regarding the administration's policy to prohibit transgender recruits.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

Cyber Awareness

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Anonymous hacks Norway whaling industry
SOURCE	https://www.dailysabah.com/economy/2017/12/11/anonymous-hacks-worlds-biggest-whaling-industry-in-norway
GIST	<p>The infamous hacker network Anonymous has struck again, this time targeting the world's largest whaling industry in Norway.</p> <p>Norway is one of the world's only countries that still commercially hunts whales, joined by Japan and Iceland and the Faroe Islands.</p> <p>"As a result of whaling, there are several groups who see Norway as a target," a National Criminal Investigation Service (Kripos) representative Lone Charlotte Pettersen told the Norwegian daily Aftenposten.</p> <p>Anonymous has frequently attacked the Nordic country's institutions that engage in whaling as part of the #OpWhales campaign, according to Aftenposten. While many activist groups seasonally sabotage hunts, Anonymous has been hacking year-round, targeting banks, media, and academic and government institutions.</p> <p>A primary target of the so-called "hacktivists" is the Norwegian Fisheries Ministry, whose website was shut down by the group earlier in the year.</p> <p>"They want to get at Norway," said Pettersen. "Therefore, it may be a sheer coincidence who is affected. As long as they can inflict harm, they are satisfied."</p> <p>"We would like to have better control in this case. It is generally a challenge for Kripos and the police."</p> <p>Norway's hacking attempt count was considered "low" in 2016, but has grown problematic over the past year, according to the National Security Authority (NSM).</p> <p>Despite global disapproval for whaling, the practice enjoys widespread political support in Norway. The country filed a formal objection to a worldwide whaling moratorium put in place in 1986, and has continued to increase catch quotas, currently at 999 for the common minke in 2017. Norwegian Fisheries Minister Per Sandberg has said he wants to double the current quotas. To compare, Iceland's current two-year quota is 224 whales and Japan per year quota is 333.</p>
Return to	
Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Cybersecurity spending surges up
SOURCE	https://www.cshub.com/news/cyber-security-spending-is-going-up-and-here%E2%80%99s-why
GIST	<p>As the threat landscape intensifies, Gartner is projecting global cyber security spending to increase 8% in 2018, to \$96.3 billion.</p> <p>Analysts believe the surge is due to a number of factors, a few of which include the sheer number of breaches, anxiety about said breaches and emerging technology to detect threats and handle incidents in real time. The latter is one silver lining in a space where thieves are both malicious and tireless.</p>

Further reasons for the boost in cyber security spending include looming regulations, buyer mindset and the ongoing “digital transformation” efforts undertaken at the enterprise level. As such, enterprise security practitioners must be privy to threats, solutions and the trajectory of the space as a whole.

Ruggero Contu, research director at Gartner, attributed much of the spending to organizational response to mega-breaches, affecting top-tier companies like A.P. Moller-Maersk, FedEx, Equifax, etc. Contu added that the high-profile attacks are particularly troubling because their residual effects could linger for up to three years.

Gartner conducted a survey in Q2 of 2016, with 512 respondents from eight countries, which helped elucidate these buying behavior figures. What’s more, 53% of respondents cited security risks as the top concern and catalyst for security spending.

Because of this consistent fear, enterprises have outsourced their IT, and security information and event management (SIEM) has rooted itself in the space. These sub-segments are growing the security services and infrastructure fields.

Regulatory compliance is another hot-button issue, as enterprises have significantly increased their spending to adhere to various measures – each of which could spell financial doom for small and midsize enterprises (SME) and large enterprises. Related measures driving further compliance (and thus tools, consulting) include the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cyber Security Framework (CSF) – a revision of which is currently being deliberated.

Elsewhere, rigid measures include: the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which goes into effect May 28, 2018 and can hand down steep fines to any enterprise which handles data from citizens inside the European Union (EU), along with China’s 2016 “Cyber Security Law.”

Those affected by the regulations typically seek out data security tools and invest in privileged access management and SIEM.

The same report suggests that by 2020, over 60% of organizations will invest in multiple data security tools (encryption, auditing, etc.), which is up from its current figure of 35%.

Consulting and outsourcing remain strong players in the global spend moving forward, as the industry grapples with its skills gap and pushes toward third-party providers and automation.

Gartner also projects that outsourcing will account for \$18.5 billion in 2018, up 11% from 2017.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Jailed hacker claims directed by FSB
SOURCE	http://www.businessinsider.com/russian-hacker-democrats-dnc-intelligence-2017-12
GIST	<p>A Russian hacker believed to be a member of a hacking collective called Lurk said in court over the summer that he was ordered by Russia's security services, known as the FSB, to hack the Democratic National Committee.</p> <p>The hacker, Konstantin Kozlovsky, told a Moscow court in August of this year that his nine-member hacking group — which has been accused of stealing over \$17 million from Russia's largest financial institutions since 2013 — has been cooperating with the FSB for several years, according to the independent Russian news outlet The Bell. Part of that cooperation included hacking the DNC, he said.</p> <p>Kozlovsky said during a hearing on August 15 that he "performed various tasks under the supervision of FSB officers," including a DNC hack and cyberattacks on "very serious military enterprises of the United</p>

States and other organizations."

Minutes from the hearing, as well as an audio recording, were posted on Kozlovsky's Facebook page. The Bell said it confirmed their authenticity with two sources, including a person who was present at the hearing. Kozlovsky also posted a letter that he wrote on November 1, 2016. The letter outlined what he said was his work for the FSB, which he said had spanned nearly a decade and, most recently, involved attacking the DNC servers.

Kozlovsky identified his FSB handler as Dmitry Dokuchaev, a cybersecurity expert who worked as a hacker under the alias "Forb" before joining the FSB. Dokuchaev has been linked to a group of hackers known as Shaltai Boltai, or Humpty Dumpty, that has published emails from Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and other Kremlin officials.

The cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike publicly concluded in June 2016 that hackers associated with the FSB breached the DNC in late 2015. WikiLeaks published internal committee emails during the Democratic National Committee in July 2016.

Kozlovsky also named Ruslan Stoyanov, a key cybercrime investigator at the Russian cybersecurity firm Kaspersky who was arrested last December along with Dokuchaev and Sergei Mikhailov, the deputy head of the information security department of the FSB.

Mikhailov has been accused of giving US intelligence officials information about a server-rental company, King Servers, through which Russian hackers have been known to attack the US, Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta reported last December. The Bell reported earlier this month that he could soon be charged with treason.

Dokuchayev and Stoyanov have been in pretrial detention since last December on treason charges, according to independent Russian news outlet Meduza.

If confirmed, Kozlovsky's work with the FSB could undermine the Kremlin's repeated claims that it had nothing to do with DNC hacks during the 2016 campaign. And it would fit a consistent pattern in which Russian intelligence officials recruit skilled hackers to engage in cybercrime.

Hiring elite criminal hackers, or cultivating them from a young age, has allowed Russian intelligence agencies like the FSB and the GRU (Russia's military intelligence arm) both to improve their foreign espionage capabilities and keep potentially rogue hackers under government control.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/12 Ransomware bitcoin problem for crooks
SOURCE	http://www.zdnet.com/article/ransomwares-bitcoin-problem-how-price-surge-means-a-headache-for-crooks/
GIST	<p>The value of bitcoin has soared in recent days: at the one point the cryptocurrency was worth almost \$19,000 before it dropped back to around \$16,500, where it has roughly remained since.</p> <p>It's almost impossible to predict what will happen next. The price of bitcoin could rise again or it could crash -- but, for now at least, a single unit of the cryptocurrency is worth a significant amount of money.</p> <p>Bitcoin has become the popular payment method for ransomware over the last two years, as the digital currency provides cybercriminals with a means of collecting ransoms, while also making it difficult the ransom-collectors' identities, thanks to the level of anonymity it offers. WannaCry, the biggest ransomware event of the year, for example, hit hundreds of thousands of PCs around the globe, encrypting files and demanding a payment of \$300 in bitcoin for the safe return of what was stored on the machine.</p> <p>In this instance, the ransomware code itself was poorly written and the vast majority of victims were able</p>

to restore their systems without giving into the demands of the cyber-attackers.

However, by the time those behind WannaCry had withdrawn funds from the associated Bitcoin wallets -- a full three months after the attack -- it meant the 338 payments victims had made were worth around \$140,000, which was an increase in value of just under \$50,000 compared to when the majority of payments were made.

If those behind WannaCry have held onto their illicit investment, they could now be sitting on over \$1m of bitcoin.

But the sudden spike in bitcoin could actually be problematic for some cybercriminals. Before the surge in value, 1 or 0.5 bitcoin was a common ransom demand, with the idea that if the fee was low enough -- back then the ransom value worked out at a few hundred dollars -- this would encourage the victim to pay up.

Even as the value of bitcoin steadily rose during the summer, some attackers were still using the standard amounts of cryptocurrency as their ransom demand. For example, Magniber ransomware demanded a payment of 0.2 bitcoin (\$1,138 in mid-October), rising to 0.4 bitcoin (\$2,275 in mid-October) if the payment wasn't received within five days. Two months later, 0.2 bitcoin is currently worth \$3,312 while 0.4 bitcoin is up to \$6,625. Princess ransomware is another recent example of malware that demanded a set amount of bitcoin.

Even if the victim is extremely attached to the encrypted content of their computer, it's likely that the rising cost of bitcoin means the price will be seen as too much to pay -- with the result the attackers make nothing.

It means that those malware writers operating with this model need to be almost constantly changing the ransomware demand in order to take into account fluctuations in the currency.

"We are seeing new ransomware malware families and their variants every week with prices adjusted to bitcoin exchange rate," Param Singh, director of security company Carbon Black's threat analysis unit, told ZDNet.

"The rising cost of bitcoin means that ransomware operators have to constantly change their prices to make sure they remain within the range where they get maximum conversion-rate and profits."

Many forms of ransomware already ask for the payment of a specified amount of dollars to be made in bitcoin. While it pins hopes on victims being able to buy a specific amount of bitcoin and successfully transfer the payment -- which some criminal gangs get around by manning help desks providing advice on buying cryptocurrency -- it's more likely to result in the victim paying up, especially if the figure is just a few hundred dollars.

"I imagine the volatility of bitcoin pricing has been an unexpected problem for cybercriminals. The average ransom demand has remained somewhere between \$300 to \$1000, and normally the ransom note will specify a USD amount," Andy Norton, director of threat intelligence at Lastline, told ZDNet.

It isn't just ransomware distributors who might be faced with the problem of valuing items in pure bitcoin: a Dark Web vendor -- whether they are selling malware, weapons, drugs, or any other illegal item -- might find that setting their price in pure bitcoin will quickly result in them pricing themselves out of the market.

With bitcoin prices continuing to rise, sophisticated cybercriminal operators can likely react to it, altering prices on a day-to-day basis to ensure that they're able to sustain their business.

Criminals are trying out alternative pricing models for ransomware already. Some criminals already operate around the idea that they charge victims just enough so that they don't see the ransom as too much to pay -- and that often depends on the country the victims are in. The Fatboy ransomware payment scheme charges victims in poorer countries less than those in richer ones.

	Meanwhile, those behind Scarab ransomware have started asking victims to suggest a payment amount for receiving the encryption key for their files.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Ransomware at businesses spike in 2017
SOURCE	https://www.esecurityplanet.com/threats/over-26-percent-of-ransomware-attacks-in-2017-hit-business-users.html
GIST	<p>The proportion of ransomware attacks hitting business users rose from 22.6 percent in 2016 to 26.2 percent in 2017, according to a recent Kaspersky Lab report.</p> <p>"Welcome to ransomware in 2017 -- the year global enterprises and industrial systems were added to the ever-growing list of victims, and targeted attackers started taking a serious interest in the threat," the report states. "It was also a year of consistently high attack numbers, but limited innovation."</p> <p>The number of new ransomware families dropped almost by half, from 62 in 2016 to 38 in 2017. At the same time, the number of modifications almost doubled, from 54,000 in 2016 to more than 96,000 in 2017.</p> <p>Sixty-five percent of businesses hit by ransomware in 2017 lost access to a significant amount or all of their data, while 36 percent paid the ransom, 17 percent of them never recovered their data.</p> <p>Three massive ransomware outbreaks -- WannaCry in May, NotPetya in June and Bad Rabbit in October - - greatly increased awareness of the threat.</p> <p>"The headline attacks of 2017 are an extreme example of the growing criminal interest in corporate targets," Kaspersky Lab senior malware analyst Fedor Sinitsyn said in a statement. "We spotted this trend in 2016, it has accelerated throughout 2017 and shows no signs of slowing down."</p> <p>"Business victims are remarkably vulnerable, can be charged a higher ransom than individuals and are often willing to pay up in order to keep the business operating," Sinitsyn added. "New business-focused infection vectors, such as through remote desktop systems, are not surprisingly also on the rise."</p> <p>According to a separate Malwarebytes report, the number of ransomware attacks in the first three quarters of 2017 exceeded the total number in 2016 by 62 percent.</p> <p>Ransomware detections surged from less than 16,000 in September 2015 to hundreds of thousands in September 2017, an increase of almost 2,000 percent in two years. In 2017 alone, ransomware detections increased by more than 300 percent from 90,351 in January 2017 to 333,871 in October.</p> <p>The report suggests that ransomware has largely replaced the use of botnets, which decreased by almost 50 percent in the first three quarters of 2017.</p> <p>A separate Fortinet report found that 22 percent of companies detected ransomware in the third quarter of 2017 alone.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/12 Survey: 83% physicians faced cyberattack
SOURCE	https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20171212005217/en/U.S.-Physicians-Cyberattack-Clinical-Practices-Survey-Accenture
GIST	CHICAGO--(BUSINESS WIRE)--More than four in five U.S. physicians (83 percent) have experienced some form of a cybersecurity attack, according to new research released today by Accenture (NYSE:ACN)

and the American Medical Association (AMA). This, along with additional findings, signals a call to action for the health care sector to increase cybersecurity support for medical practices in their communities.

The findings, which examined the experiences of roughly 1,300 U.S. physicians, underscore the recognition that it is not “if” but “when” a cyberattack will occur. More than half (55 percent) of the physicians were very or extremely concerned about future cyberattacks in their practice. In addition, physicians were most concerned that future attacks could interrupt their clinical practices (cited by 74 percent), compromise the security of patient records (74 percent) or impact patient safety (53 percent).

“The important role of information sharing within clinical care makes health care a uniquely attractive target for cyber criminals through computer viruses and phishing scams that, if successful, can threaten care delivery and patient safety,” said AMA President David O. Barbe, M.D., M.H.A. “New research shows that most physicians think that securely exchanging electronic data is important to improve health care. More support from the government, technology and medical sectors would help physicians with a proactive cybersecurity defense to better ensure the availability, confidentiality and integrity of health care data.”

The findings show the most common type of cyberattack was phishing – cited by more than half (55 percent) of physicians who experienced an attack – followed by computer viruses (48 percent). Physicians from medium and large practices were twice as likely as those in small practices to experience these types of attacks.

Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of all the physicians who experienced a cyberattack experienced up to four hours of downtime before they resumed operations, and approximately one-third (29 percent) of physicians in medium-sized practices that experienced a cyberattack said they experienced nearly a full day of downtime.

In addition, the vast majority (85 percent) of physicians believe it is very or extremely important to share personal health data outside of their health system – they just want to do it safely. Two-thirds believe that greater access to patient data both inside (cited by 67 percent) and outside (65 percent) their health system would help them provide quality patient care more efficiently. In addition, a significant majority (83 percent) of physicians said that HIPAA compliance alone is insufficient and that a more holistic approach to assessing and prioritizing risks is needed.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/12 Bitcoin slips; futures volumes drop
SOURCE	https://money.usnews.com/investing/news/articles/2017-12-12/bitcoin-slips-to-around-16-300-futures-volumes-drop
GIST	<p>SINGAPORE (Reuters) - Virtual currency bitcoin dipped slightly from the previous session's record highs on Tuesday, after a month of whirlwind and volatile gains leading up to the launch of bitcoin futures on the weekend.</p> <p>Bitcoin was quoted at \$16,390 on the Luxembourg-based Bitstamp exchange, down half a percent or \$80 from its previous close.</p> <p>The world's biggest and best-known cryptocurrency hit a record high of \$17,270 on Monday, registering a nearly twenty-fold increase in its price for the year as it drew in millions of new investors.</p> <p>The newly launched bitcoin futures on the Cboe Futures Exchange were also tepid, with prices steady and volumes a fraction of those seen on Monday. Bitcoin futures maturing in January were at \$17,970, with 237 contracts traded compared with 3,956 contracts on the first day.</p> <p>The Cboe March 2018 contract was quoted at \$18,110, with volume in the low double-digits.</p>

	<p>"The trading volume was huge yesterday as bitcoin price fluctuated in a wide range over the weekend," said Park Nok-sun, a cryptocurrency analyst at NH Investment and Securities in Seoul.</p> <p>"Now that the exchange price is relatively calm, it is obvious for futures trading volume to fall."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Public WiFi exploited to generate Monero
SOURCE	https://www.hackread.com/in-store-wifi-provider-starbucks-site-to-generate-monero/
GIST	<p>The value of Bitcoin is increasing rapidly making it almost impossible for most of the world to invest and that is why users are trying to invest or mine other currencies including Monero digital coin which is around USD 265.</p> <p>On December 2nd, a Twitter user Noah Dinkin sent out a screenshot that showed coffee giant Starbucks' reward site for Argentina was using CoinHive's code to generate Monero coins by using CPU power of site's visitors. In this case, Starbucks' customers.</p> <p>In his tweet, Dinkin mentioned that the culprit behind this scheme could be the company's in-store WiFi provider. However, for last few months cybercriminals have been hacking websites to place CoinHive code secretly. In fact, just a few days ago researchers identified more than 5,000 sites that were hijacked to insert CoinHive code yet Starbucks direct involvement is still unclear.</p> <p>"Hi, @Starbucks @StarbucksAr did you know that your in-store wifi provider in Buenos Aires forces a 10-second delay when you first connect to the wifi so it can mine bitcoin using a customer's laptop? Feels a little off-brand.. cc @GMFlickinger," the tweet said.</p> <p>Starbucks is popular for providing free WiFi access to its customers while its reward program lets customers earn reward stars based on the amount of money they spend at Starbucks. But little did the Argentinian customers know that CPU power of their devices was being used to generate Monero coins.</p> <p>As of now, there has been no response from Starbucks but for customers, the lesson is there is no such thing as "free WiFi."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Necurs botnet returns to prevalence
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/necurs-botnet-returns-to-top-10/
GIST	<p>Over Thanksgiving, hackers were found using Necurs, considered to be the largest spam botnet in the world, to distribute the relatively new Scarab ransomware that was first seen in June 2017. The Necurs botnet started mass distribution of Scarab during the holiday, sending over 12 million emails in a single morning.</p> <p>Necurs has previously been used to distribute some of the most insidious malware variants to hit business networks in the past 12 months, including the Locky and Globeimposter families. But the Scarab activity has catapulted it to Check Point's list of the top ten most prevalent malwares.</p> <p>"The re-emergence of the Necurs botnet highlights how malware that may seem to be fading away doesn't always disappear or become any less of a threat," said Maya Horowitz, Threat Intelligence, group manager at Check Point. "Despite Necurs being well known to the security community, hackers are still enjoying lots of success distributing malware with this highly effective infection vehicle."</p> <p>As for the other threats, RoughTed, a large scale malvertising campaign, remains the most prevalent threat, with the Rig exploit kit in second, and the Conficker worm in third.</p>

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/12 Facing dissent, Ethiopia turns to spyware
SOURCE	http://www.securityweek.com/facing-dissent-abroad-ethiopia-turns-spyware
GIST	<p>As soon as Ethiopian opposition activist Henok Gabisa read the email, he knew something was not right.</p> <p>With the subject line "Democracy in Ethiopia: Can it be saved?", the message seemed tailor-made for him.</p> <p>Yet the US-based academic, who teaches law at Washington and Lee University, said it was written vaguely and contained a suspicious hyperlink.</p> <p>Indeed, the email was an attempt to infect his computer with spyware that secretly gathers information and similar to hundreds sent to Ethiopian dissidents worldwide that were probably ordered by the country's government, according to a report published last week by the cyber security research group Citizen Lab.</p> <p>Ethiopia's government has been increasingly on the defensive since the country's two largest ethnic groups, the Oromos and Amharas, began protesting in 2015.</p> <p>Hundreds died in the violence and tens of thousands were rounded up in sweeping arrests, among them opposition political activists and journalists.</p> <p>But many of Ethiopia's fiercest critics are outside the country, and thus beyond the immediate reach of its security apparatus, particularly among its diaspora population in the USA.</p> <p>To counter that, researchers and a lawyer who spoke to AFP say Ethiopia has ramped up the use of computer spyware, as well as employing traditional physical surveillance, going so far as to potentially stalk dissidents on US soil.</p> <p>Neither American law enforcement agencies nor courts have done much to stop it, they say.</p> <p>Human Rights Watch has accused Ethiopia of using evidence from spyware intercepts against dissidents within the country, in addition to easily intercepted phone calls and text messages sent over the single, government-owned phone company.</p> <p>In 2014 one US-based dissident whose computer had been infected sued Ethiopia in a Washington federal court, under the pseudonym Kidane.</p> <p>That case ended earlier this year, when the court ruled Ethiopia wasn't liable because the hacking took place outside the US.</p> <p>"Foreign governments have carte blanche to launch cyber attacks against American citizens in their own homes with complete immunity from US courts," said Nate Cardozo, a lawyer with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a San Francisco-based digital rights group who supported the case.</p> <p>Cutting edge spyware isn't the only tool Ethiopia deploys against opponents in the US, activists believe.</p> <p>The offices of ESAT (Ethiopian Satellite Television) near Washington are under constant surveillance, Cardozo says, by people he believes are employed by the government who perch in a van across the street and take photos of people entering and exiting the building.</p> <p>"As a lawyer, that harassment by an agent of the other side is something I have never experienced in my decade-long career," Cardozo said, adding that the US Department of Justice took little interest in Kidane's lawsuit.</p>

	<p>The lack of consequences and profusion of spyware manufacturers mean Ethiopia is likely to continue using the tools.</p> <p>"Ethiopia has been found out many times," said Eva Galperin, EFF's director of cyber security. "I think the chances they will stop using surveillance spyware to spy on dissidents is zero."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Top selling handgun safe vulnerable
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/vaultek-vt20i-handgun-safe-can-be-opened-using-bluetooth-attacks/article/713415/
GIST	<p>A top selling electronic gun safe was found to be vulnerable to brute force attacks that could allow someone nearby to remotely open the unit.</p> <p>The Bluetooth enabled the Vaultek VT20i, one of Amazon's top selling handgun safes, is designed to be opened using either a manually entered PIN code or from the safe owner's phone using a mobile app.</p> <p>Researchers at Two Six Labs developed what they are calling "BlueSteal" to leverage multiple security failures in the safe including CVE-2017-17435, which involves a lack of encrypted communication, and CVE-2017-17436, which involves a failure of pin code verification, to remotely open the device without the app or knowing the PIN, according to a Dec. 6 blog post.</p> <p>The attack was also enabled as a result of the device allowing for unlimited pairing attempts with the safe and using a pairing pin code that is the same as the unlocking pin code. Researchers notified the manufacture on October 6, 2017 and were notified a month later that the company had reviewed the findings and updated the devices with "improved Bluetooth security" along with the option to disable the Bluetooth unlock feature.</p> <p>Vaultek is offering free upgrades and encourages concerned users to contact their support team for details.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 New variant Blind ransomware emerges
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/new-variant-blind-ransomware-being-seen-in-the-wild/article/713422/
GIST	<p>A new variant of Blind ransomware carrying a .napoleon extension and that is being delivered via hacked internet information services (ISS) servers is now operating in the wild.</p> <p>Malwarebytes Labs reported that while it is not 100 percent certain how the ransomware, which is being called Napoleon, is being distributed the initial clues point toward it being spread manually by dropping and deploying on hacked computers most likely through ISS. An ISS is an extensible web server created by Microsoft for use with the Windows NT family.</p> <p>Malwarebytes said this form of distribution is neither popular nor efficient, but it has been used in the past with DMALocker and LeChiffre ransomware. More recently hacked ISS servers were used to mine the Monero cryptocurrency.</p> <p>The upgrades included with Napoleon include eliminating the cache file that in previous instances could be used to decrypt the files and the attackers created a new graphic user interface. Napoleon also has the victim contact the attacker through an email instead of using a Tor-based website. Malwarebytes believes this means the attacker only intended to run a small campaign.</p> <p>The good news is Napoleon is unlikely to become widely used, however, due to the encryption being used there is no way to release the locked files without the key.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Banking trojans sneak into Google Play
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/the-malicious-apps-are-disguised-as-crypto-monitor-and-story saver/article/713450/
GIST	<p>Banking trojans have once again made their way past Google Play's security mechanisms, this time to target the Polish Financial sector.</p> <p>The malicious apps made their way into the store disguised as the seemingly benign apps “Crypto Monitor”, a cryptocurrency price tracking app, and “StorySaver”, a third-party tool for downloading stories from Instagram, according to a Dec. 11 ESET security blog post.</p> <p>“Crypto Monitor”, was uploaded to the store on Nov. 25 of this year under the developer name walltestudio while “StorySaver” appeared on Google Play on Nov. 29 under the developer name kirillsamsonov45. The two apps collectively reached between 1000 and 5000 downloads by Dec. 4.</p> <p>The apps delivered the promised functionalities but also displayed fake notifications and login forms which appear to be from legitimate banking applications but are actually just phishing pages harvesting credentials. The malicious apps also intercept text messages to bypass SMS-based 2-factor authentication.</p> <p>“After the malicious apps are launched, they compare the apps installed on the compromised device against a list of targeted banking apps – in this case, the official apps of fourteen Polish banks (the list of specific banking apps can be found at the end),” the post said.</p> <p>“If any of the fourteen apps are found on the device, the malware can display fake login forms imitating those of the targeted legitimate apps.”</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Tex. agriculture data breach exposes kids
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/data-breach-exposes-pii-of-700-texas-school-children/article/713226/
GIST	<p>A Texas Department of Agriculture laptop was hit with ransomware in late October possibly exposing the personal information of 700 students spread over 39 school districts, but some school officials are miffed because they were not promptly informed about the attack.</p> <p>The Department of Agriculture reported the issue in a notice on Nov. 22 , almost one month after the incident occurred, and The Dallas Morning News is reporting that some school district officials and those in charge of other affected agencies were not directly notified but had to go out and find the information on their own.</p> <p>The Department of Agriculture told The Dallas Morning News that it had notified all the districts, but some of the emails may have ended up in spam folders adding that the laptop in question was “more subject to malware than it should have been.”</p> <p>The Department of Agriculture operates the state's federal nutrition program. The information possibly compromised includes Social Security numbers, home addresses, birth dates and personal phone numbers of the students and their families, according to a department statement.</p> <p>“To date, TDA's Information Security Officer (ISO) has identified more than 700 students whose sensitive personal information was, or is reasonably believed to have been, exposed to acquisition by an unauthorized person. It is important to note that, to date, TDA's ISO has not discovered any evidence to suggest misuse of the information that was compromised by the ransomware exploit,” the department said.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 'MoneyTaker' stole \$11M; targeted banks
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2017/12/bank-hackers.html
GIST	<p>Security researchers have uncovered a previously undetected group of Russian-speaking hackers that has silently been targeting Banks, financial institutions, and legal firms, primarily in the United States, UK, and Russia.</p> <p>Moscow-based security firm Group-IB published a 36-page report on Monday, providing details about the newly-disclosed hacking group, dubbed MoneyTaker, which has been operating since at least May 2016.</p> <p>In the past 18 months, the hacking group is believed to have conducted more than 20 attacks against various financial organisations—stolen more than \$11 Million and sensitive documents that could be used for next attacks.</p> <p>According to the security firm, the group has primarily been targeting card processing systems, including the AWS CBR (Russian Interbank System) and SWIFT international bank messaging service (United States).</p> <p>"Criminals stole documentation for OceanSystems' FedLink card processing system, which is used by 200 banks in Latin America and the US." Group-IB says in its report.</p> <p>Group-IB also warned that the MoneyTaker attacks against financial organizations appear to be ongoing and banks in Latin America could be their next target.</p> <p>MoneyTaker: 1.5 Years of Silent Operations</p> <p>Since its first successful attack in May last year, MoneyTaker has targeted banks in California, Illinois, Utah, Oklahoma, Colorado, South Carolina, Missouri, North Carolina, Virginia and Florida, primarily targeting small community banks with limited cyber defenses.</p> <p>According to the report, the average money stolen by MoneyTaker from United States banks alone was about \$500,000, and more than \$3 million was stolen from at least three Russian banks.</p> <p>Group-IB believes that the hackers are now looking for ways to compromise the SWIFT interbank communication system, although it found no evidence of MoneyTaker behind any of the recent cyber attacks on SWIFT systems.</p>
	<p>Return to</p> <p>Top</p>

HEADLINE	12/11 BBB: tech support scam worldwide issue
SOURCE	http://q13fox.com/2017/12/11/bbb-finds-tech-support-scam-is-a-worldwide-problem/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — A new study by the Better Business Bureau (BBB) finds more and more people are becoming victims of the computer technical support scam.</p> <p>Many have come across this scam which targets your computer.</p> <p>"This is where your computer locks up and a pop-up comes up and a voice that says you've got a virus. It gives you a phone number to call and that just gets things going," said Veronica Craker, content and communications director with the Better Business Bureau.</p> <p>The report called: "Pop-Ups and Impostors: A Better Business Bureau Study of the Growing Worldwide Problem of Computer Tech Support Scams" found that anyone who owns or uses a computer is a potential target.</p> <p>"I think one of the reasons is we're all on our computers all of the time and when the computer locks up a</p>

	<p>lot of people don't know how to get out of it," added Craker.</p> <p>The study found that most people lose money using credit cards or debit cards, while checks are the second most-common form of payment.</p> <p>The BBB study found that just over 85% of the scammers come from India, while less than 10 percent are operating inside the US.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 SEC warns on buying cryptocurrencies
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/sec-to-investors-beware-when-buying-cryptocurrencies/
GIST	<p>The top U.S. securities cop has a message for people eager to cash in on the white-hot market for digital currencies: Watch out.</p> <p>So-called cryptocurrencies are increasingly in the spotlight, with Bitcoin prices soaring nearly 1,600 percent this year. Trading in Bitcoin futures contracts started this weekend on the Chicago Board of Exchange, a sign of growing acceptance on Wall Street.</p> <p>A growing number of companies also are raising funds through "initial coin offerings," or ICOs, complete with celebrity endorsements ranging from boxing legend Floyd Mayweather to Hollywood star Jamie Foxx.</p> <p>Yet while the uninitiated may view ICOs as similar to an initial public offering of stock by a company going public, looks can be deceiving, Securities and Exchange Commission Chairman Jay Clayton warned Monday in an unusual statement on the agency's website.</p> <p>"Investors should understand that to date no initial coin offerings have been registered with the SEC," he said. "The SEC also has not to date approved for listing and trading any exchange-traded products (such as ETFs) holding cryptocurrencies or other assets related to cryptocurrencies."</p> <p>"If any person today tells you otherwise, be especially wary," Clayton added.</p> <p>"Please also recognize that these markets span national borders and that significant trading may occur on systems and platforms outside the United States," Clayton said. "Your invested funds may quickly travel overseas without your knowledge. As a result, risks can be amplified, including the risk that market regulators, such as the SEC, may not be able to effectively pursue bad actors or recover funds."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 What is net neutrality?
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/net-neutrality/story?id=48596615&cid=clicksource_79_2_hero_headlines_headlines_hed
GIST	<p>The Federal Communications Commission will vote Thursday on whether to remove net neutrality rules instituted during the Obama administration, after a proposal by President Donald Trump's appointed FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, who suggested in May removing the classification for internet service providers (ISPs) as public utilities. This could allow ISPs to charge more for consumers to access different websites.</p> <p>Here's what you need to know:</p> <p>What is net neutrality?</p> <p>Net neutrality is the principle that ISPs treat all content equally and not give preference to some digital content providers. That means the consumer can load every website, app, video, .gif, etc., equally,</p>

regardless of where the content is hosted. For example, an ISP may not charge more for sites that stream movies or promote a specific agenda. This is also referred to as the open internet.

When was the current net neutrality law passed?

After a request from President Obama after public comments, the FCC voted in February 2015 to classify consumer broadband service as a public utility under Title II Order of the 1934 Communications Act. Under that law, the FCC adopted no-blocking, no-throttling and no-paid-prioritization rules, according to the notice of proposed rulemaking released by the FCC. The measure controls how companies provide services to consumers. Under this order, the internet is deemed a common carrier or public utility, so ISPs are regulated. Other public utilities include electricity and phone service companies.

Who supports the Title II classification?

Supporters of Title II classification say it keeps the internet open and accessible to anyone, regardless of socioeconomic status. Without the current regulations, they claim ISPs could charge more for access to specific sites and censor content.

Without it, consumers would be "paying more money to their internet companies to get a less diverse, less interesting [internet]," said Evan Greer, the campaign director at Fight for the Future, a nonprofit group focusing on digital rights.

"You can't have real net neutrality because the FCC can't enforce it, and the courts have made this clear," said Mark Stanley, the director of communications at Demand Progress, a national grass-roots group that focuses on a number of issues, including internet freedom.

Stanley was referring to the 2014 Verizon v. FCC lawsuit, in which the courts deemed that the FCC did not have authority to enforce portions of the Open Internet Order because ISPs were not considered common carriers, i.e., public utilities. In 2015 the FCC voted to deem ISPs common carriers and therefore put them under the jurisdiction of a Title II order. It's worth noting that Pai previously served as an associate general counsel for Verizon Communications from 2001 to 2003, according to his FCC biography.

Net Neutrality Day

On July 12, 2017, supporters of the current regulations organized a day of action. Stanley and Greer confirmed for ABC News that over 2 million comments were submitted to the FCC during the day of action. Stanley said this shows that "only in Washington is this a political issue. We'd like to see the FCC drop their proposal to roll back net neutrality protections."

"So much of [the support] came from the small players who really have the most to lose here," said Green.

Stanley said they consider as allies smaller ISPs that came out in support of the day of action and the current FCC regulations. Sonic, a midsize regional ISP, took a stance in support in an effort to "protect the internet and protect competition."

"We take that position because there isn't enough competitive pressure to create a truly fair marketplace in the U.S.," Dane Jasper, the CEO of Sonic, told ABC News. He explained that most American households only have one or two choices of ISPs, so "in an environment where you don't have effective competition, I think regulation is necessary [to create a level playing field]."

Large companies like Twitter, Netflix and Google also signed on in support of the day of action. In an online statement, Twitter said, "The FCC should abandon its misguided effort to obviate all the work that has been done on behalf of all Internet users."

Who opposes the Title II classification?

Opponents of the Title II classification argue that the regulations are unnecessary and hamper job creation and free market competition.

The Internet & Television Association (NCTA) released a statement supporting an open internet. The group supports net neutrality but believes the regulations passed in 2015 do not promote a free internet. "We've always been committed to an open internet that gives you the freedom to be in charge of your online experience. And that will not change," NCTA said.

AT&T said it supports an open internet but does not support the current FCC regulations, according to The Associated Press.

Verizon directed ABC News to an online statement reiterating its support for an open internet. The company said it does not agree that the best way to achieve an open internet is through utility regulations on ISPs and cited fake news and bad actors as pitfalls.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Secret message apps on rise at work
SOURCE	http://money.cnn.com/2017/12/11/technology/secret-messaging-apps-work/index.html
GIST	<p>The texts are long gone. That is becoming a more common reality in workplaces.</p> <p>More companies are starting to approve the use of ephemeral messaging apps like Wickr, Telegram and Vaporstream for internal communications. The tools are used for security. They can keep sensitive conversations from falling into the wrong hands by automatically deleting messages without saving a copy.</p> <p>But the apps are also stirring up legal, regulatory and company culture issues.</p> <p>For example, in its trade secrets fight between with Uber, Waymo claims that Uber executives used Wickr and Telegram to discuss issues central to the litigation. Uber acknowledged it used the apps, but did not elaborate on what they were used for.</p> <p>Wickr lets users set messages to be deleted immediately, or after a period of time. The messages are encrypted and not stored on Wickr's servers, so there's no way to retrieve them once they're gone.</p> <p>In addition to its free app, Wickr offers professional versions that give companies more control over policy enforcement and message retention.</p> <p>"I think it's very clear that there's nothing explicitly unlawful about using private communication or encrypted applications," said Wickr CEO Joel Wallenstrom.</p> <p>There are legitimate reasons why a company would want a communication tool that doesn't leave a trace. Employees may want to discuss their own trade secrets or sensitive deals. Email is an easy mark for cyber-criminals. It's the most common target at companies, and is often compromised through simple phishing attacks.</p> <p>"In email, you need to have every conversation ... in the exact same manner as you would knowing it would be on the cover of the New York Times tomorrow," said Wallenstrom.</p> <p>There's been a shift in how long companies keep emails. Policies to retain emails for 30 days are becoming standard, according to Wallenstrom. It's a major change that has been happening over the past few years, starting with the Sony hack in 2014 and accelerating after the 2016 election.</p> <p>The next logical step could be companies adding a system that doesn't keep messages at all.</p>

	<p>Various federal and state laws require companies to keep messages and records for a set period of time.</p> <p>Many rules are industry specific. Finance companies have to save emails for anywhere from three to seven years. Health companies need to comply with HIPAA, the federal law that protects patient confidentiality. Many states require all companies keep certain employment related records for a year. Government officials have their own complicated transparency requirements.</p> <p>"If you're using these kinds of applications in your workplace, you may run afoul of the law," said Stephen Wu, a Silicon Valley lawyer who specializes in information security, privacy and information governance.</p> <p>"There's so many of these record retention requirements that to use these apps on a wide scale on a business, you'd be risking that you'd be out of compliance."</p> <p>Enterprise versions of ephemeral messaging tools give companies a way to enforce any rules that apply to them. For example, Vaporstream, a secure and ephemeral messaging product for companies, focuses on compliance tools that let companies apply existing retention policies.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

Terror Conditions

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	12/12 NYC bomber not on Bangladesh list
SOURCE	http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/12/12/2017/New-York-bomber-not-on-Bangladesh-terror-list-Dhaka-police
GIST	<p>Dhaka: Bangladesh police scrambled Tuesday for details about alleged New York subway bomber Akayed Ullah, but uncovered few early leads that might shed light on what might have driven him to try and kill commuters with a homemade bomb.</p> <p>US police say the 27-year-old immigrant from Bangladesh set off a crude bomb strapped to his body in a crowded New York subway passage on Monday but the device failed to detonate properly, leaving him the only one seriously harmed.</p> <p>Ullah told police investigators he wanted to avenge US airstrikes on the Islamic State group and was also inspired by Christmas terror plots in Europe, US media reported.</p> <p>Bangladesh police are investigating whether Ullah was radicalised in his Muslim-majority homeland, where foreigners have been among those targeted in deadly assaults claimed by the IS group and Al Qaeda.</p> <p>"So far, his name is not on our wide-range list of radicalised persons or members of terror groups, both from Bangladesh and outside," senior counter terrorism police officer Sanwar Hossain told AFP.</p> <p>"We are trying to gather more details," he said.</p> <p>US authorities say Ullah migrated seven years ago as the member of a family already living there under what is known as "chain immigration".</p> <p>But a police spokeswoman in Bangladesh said preliminary investigations suggested the family left "17 or 18 years ago".</p> <p>Bangladesh authorities are unclear exactly when Ullah left, but speculated he could have been shuttling back and forth between the two countries.</p> <p>"Maybe he was 10 or 11 years old (when the family left for the US)," police spokeswoman Sahely Ferdous</p>

told AFP, adding Ullah's "development of thinking" likely took place there.

Bangladesh police said Ullah's family hailed from Sandwip, an island off the coast of the southern port city of Chittagong but his father had left for the capital Dhaka some 30 years ago.

Visited Bangladesh in September

A friend of the family told AFP that Ullah married two years ago, but did not take his wife to the US.

"His wife lives in Hazaribagh neighbourhood in Dhaka, where the family lived for the last three decades, and where his father ran a grocery shop. They were married in 2015," Sazzad Hossain Mukul, a friend of Ullah's mother, told AFP.

He said Ullah visited Bangladesh in September, and spent a month with his wife.

Police confirmed the date of his last visit, but could not say whether Ullah was married.

"We are questioning one of his relatives for more information," Chittagong police chief Noor-e-Alam Mina told AFP. Ullah was born in Dhaka and spent at least his early years in the capital, Mina added.

The impoverished riverine nation of 160 million has been waging a war against homegrown extremism in the wake of numerous attacks by radical groups in recent years.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Security challenge for transport systems
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/dec/11/new-york-subway-explosion-commuter-train-rail
GIST	<p>Every weekday, nearly 5.7 million people move through New York City's subway system, commuting through 472 subway stations and across 662 miles of track.</p> <p>Monday's attempted bomb attack struck at the heart of the commuter network in the Monday morning rush hour. Officials said the bomb detonated in a subway passageway in midtown Manhattan, between Port Authority bus terminal, which itself serves 65 million passengers each year, and the Times Square subway station at 42nd Street.</p> <p>What New York's mayor dubbed an "attempted terrorist attack" comes nearly three months after a morning attack on the London Tube in September, which left 29 people injured after a bomb inside a train carriage partially detonated.</p> <p>New York police commissioner James O'Neill said after Monday's attack: "We have almost 3,000 transit cops. All parts of the system are patrolled." However, a highly visible security presence cannot provide absolute protection.</p> <p>American counter-terrorism experts have long warned that, compared to the heavy security and screening regimens at airports, trains and commuter rail systems are comparatively vulnerable to attack. This summer, an al-Qaida propaganda outlet reportedly released a guide to derailing trains and attacking rail systems, which included a list of popular American train routes, including the Acela Express line through Boston, New York, and Washington.</p> <p>Commuter rail lines and long-distance trains are "both vulnerable," said Colin Clarke, a political scientist and counter-terrorism expert at the Rand Corporation. "You don't get searched getting on to either. There's no screening system."</p> <p>Train commuters have long been terror targets. The 1995 sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway left 13</p>

people dead and injured 6,000 others. The terror attack was carried out by a doomsday cult. In 2004, jihadists carried out a series of coordinated bombings on Madrid's crowded commuter trains, which left 191 people dead and nearly 2000 injured. In 2005, suicide bombers in London killed 52 people and injured hundreds.

In 2015, an attacker wielding an AK-47 opened fire on a high-speed train from Amsterdam to Paris, but was disarmed by three US citizens, two of them soldiers, before killing anyone.

It's unlikely that daily commuters would accept more intensive, airport-style screening procedures unless there was another major, successful attack, Clarke, the counter-terrorism expert, said, and even then, searching every single person before they boarded public transit systems would likely be unrealistic.

Some public metro system are moving towards mass screening. Shanghai's metro now screens passenger bags and other carry-ons, said Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, a transit security expert at the urban planning department of the University of California Los Angeles. "There was not much of a delay," she said.

Shanghai's metro system serves 3.4 billion riders a year compared with New York City's 1.8 billion, according to statistics compiled by New York's transit system. High-speed rail lines in Europe do similar baggage screening, Loukaitou-Sideris said.

Since transit operators often argue that intensive screenings will lead to unacceptable delays, officials have instead pursued better security through environmental design, like choosing construction materials that are shatter-resistant and non-combustible, or removing trash cans where bombs might be stored, as Tokyo did after its attack, she said.

Researchers also found that information-sharing between different American agencies to prevent attacks improved in the decade since the London bombings, Loukaitou-Sideris said.

In the United States, the deadliest attack on public transit was carried out not by jihadists with bombs, but by a mass shooter, "a mentally disturbed individual who killed six and wounded another 19 passengers aboard a Long Island commuter train in 1993," according to a January 2016 report by the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University in California. "'Lone loons' rather than 'lone wolves' continue to be the threat in North America," the report's authors wrote.

Recent attacks have left commuters on edge. In November, a fight between two men at London's Oxford Circus tube station sparked a mass panic among riders after they heard screams and saw others running and thought an attack was taking place. Patrons hiding in a basement at an Italian restaurant near the station burst into applause when a waiter announced there had been no terrorist incident.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Expert: NYC attack is 'new norm'
SOURCE	http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2017/12/11/nyc-bombing-a-game-changer/
GIST	<p>NEW YORK (CBSNewYork) — A counter-terrorism security expert said the capture of a suspect in today's underground explosion at the Port Authority Bus Terminal could provide investigators with new information about potential conspiracies against the safety of New Yorkers and if a specific organization was behind today's incident.</p> <p>Monday's pipe bomb blast left four people injured, including the suspect said to have been wearing a secondary explosive device.</p> <p>"This is something that is a game changer," said security expert Manny Gomez. "We've never had a suicide bomber on this side of the Atlantic Ocean, Gomez said. So if that's the case, hopefully we won't have copycats which is obviously the concern."</p>

“If they are successful in recruiting suicide bombers, we’re going to have a problem,” Gomez added.

“Now (police) have what was one of their worst fears: A bomber who is clearly prepared to take his own life to take as many other people as possible,” he said.

The suspect has been identified as Akayed Ullah, 27, who was wearing an improvised explosive device, Police Commissioner James O’Neill said. Ullah is from Bangladesh and was living in Brooklyn.

Gomez said investigators will now be interviewing Ullah’s friends and family as well as looking at international contacts.

“This is happening as we speak, fortunately we got this person alive, we will very quickly be able to identify who he is... to ascertain if this person had other people working with him and if there is a possibility of a conspiracy,” he said.

The fact one of the explosive devices was taken intact before being detonated will provide investigators with a wealth of information, Gomez said.

“The investigation is obviously tell by the forensics of the explosive device how sophisticated it is, how the wiring and types of materials are used in the pipe bomb,” he said. “That in and of itself will determine if this person helped in the creation of this bomb, the signature of the bomb itself will tell us what organization – perhaps even what terrorist bomb maker was the person who invented this bomb... That will tell us if this bomb was given to him by an outside source, or was he able to make this bomb himself.”

Police described Ullah as a “loser in his basement” and maybe he proved that because he couldn’t carry out his plan, CBS2’s Dick Brennan said to Gomez

Gomez also talked about the dangers of Lone Wolf or so-called “inspired attacker.”

“To date we have approximately 900 open investigations throughout the country of persons of interest that could potentially be plotting an attack. The big concern is people like this person who was apparently off the radar of law enforcement and in his basement literally cooking up a bomb to kill a lot of people.”

Gomez is a former special agent with the FBI who investigated terrorism and espionage cases as an agent in the National Security Division. He is also a former sergeant in the NYPD.

“This is the new norm and unfortunately it will happen again,” Gomez added.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 NCTC chief: ISIS attacks adapting
SOURCE	https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/counterterrorism-chief-says-isis-adapting-to-inspire-not-control-attacks
GIST	<p>What do officials know about the attempted morning attack of a New York subway and the motives of the alleged bomber? Nicholas Rasmussen, outgoing director of the National Counterterrorism Center, joins Judy Woodruff to discuss the difficulties of preventing such attacks and the chances of another 9/11-style event.</p> <p>Judy Woodruff: We return now to our top story- the attempted bombing this morning of a New York City subway. A short time ago, I spoke with Nicholas Rasmussen. He’s the director of the National Counterterrorism Center. He will be leaving that post later this month, after 16 years of counterterror work. I began by asking him what more he could tell us about today’s attack.</p> <p>Nicholas Rasmussen: This is the kind of event that bears all the hallmarks of a terrorist event.</p>

I'm certainly going to defer to my FBI and New York Police Department colleagues who have been speaking publicly about it today. They're the closest to the investigation. But, again, what I'm hearing from them, what we're hearing from them suggests that this is an individual who had a terrorist intent, and at least it seems as if he wasn't able to carry out the kind of deadly attack that he might have hoped to.

Judy Woodruff: Should New York City have been better prepared for this, or is this the kind of low-tech event that Americans are just going to have to get used to happening?

Nicholas Rasmussen: I would put New York up there with any metropolitan police department in the world, perhaps even above any metropolitan police department in the world, in terms of their level of preparation and their level of capability.

So the last thing you will hear from me is any critique or criticism of how well New York is prepared. This is just a feature of the landscape we're living in, in the modern world, the kind of terrorist attack that's very difficult to prevent, if it involves — if, as it appears as it might, involves someone who was acting alone, acting with relatively small-scale material capabilities, that these are not the kinds of things that are easily prevented.

Judy Woodruff: Someone who appears to be acting alone. How does this fit into the larger picture of the terrorism threat that this country faces?

Nicholas Rasmussen: Again, I want to be careful about talking about this particular case, because I think we have learned over time that these stories always have layers, and there will be layers to be uncovered as the NYPD and the FBI investigate this individual.

But it, as I said, bears the hallmarks of the kind of terrorism we're seeing, individuals who are not necessarily tied directly to a terrorist organization. They're not operating at the command-and-control of some figure in Baghdad or some figure in Syria, but they are often operating inspired by a terrorism narrative that they see and attach to a group like ISIS.

And those individuals acting alone can be quite lethal and quite dangerous. But they also, at the same time, don't — often don't have the same high-level capability of a terrorist cell of the sort we saw during the al-Qaida-dominated era of a few years ago.

Judy Woodruff: Well, you just referred to ISIS, the Islamic State, being driven out of the territory that they had been holding in Iraq and in Syria, so how do you describe the threat that they pose now to the United States?

Nicholas Rasmussen: Well, we have certainly done a great deal to counter the kind of threat ISIS presented when it maintained that kind of territorial control over large swathes of Iraq and Syria.

But now, having shrunk that territorial safe haven, the group is finding that it is adapting its model, looking to inspire individuals operating overseas, rather than trying to direct and command and control them, but instead looking to motivate individuals to act in their own environment. Don't come to Iraq and Syria. Do what you can where you are using whatever tools are at your disposal, whether that's a gun or a knife or a vehicle, as we saw in New York some weeks back as well.

That's a different model of terrorism. It's harder to prevent. It looks often more like a criminal model, but it still can be quite lethal and dangerous.

Judy Woodruff: And what does that mean for Americans in terms of how Americans, people who live in this country should think about terrorism?

Nicholas Rasmussen: I think it calls — it puts us in a place where Americans need to be responsible, in many cases, for their own security, looking around, understanding what's happening around you, maintaining situational awareness, because it's not likely in most cases that the FBI or the federal

government is going to bust up a terrorist cell of this sort in advance.

But, as I said, these acts almost operate at the level of criminal acts. They're not very different from what criminals often do. And so, much like other forms of criminal violence, see something, say something, you know, reach out to the local law enforcement authorities if you see something that looks amiss and be a participant in your own community's security.

Judy Woodruff: So, what would you say are the odds of another huge 9/11-scale attack on this country?

Nicholas Rasmussen: I don't know that I would put a single number on it, but I do know that the work we have done as a government against al-Qaida operating out of Pakistan and Iraq — Pakistan and Afghanistan over the last decade has made that kind of attack increasingly difficult for al-Qaida.

And we face far less prospect of that kind of attack today than we faced a decade ago. That's something I think Americans can feel pretty good about.

Judy Woodruff: President Trump has taken, I think it's fair to say, a much stronger anti-Islam stance than his predecessors. How has that affected the work that you do?

Nicholas Rasmussen: I would say, at one level, it really doesn't impact the work that we do.

The kind of direct security-service-to-security-service cooperation that we engage in with key partner countries around the world, whether that's — it's the British, the French, the Germans, the Australians, the Canadians, all of our closest partners, I would argue that it really doesn't impact day the day the kind of professional level law enforcement and intelligence operation we engage in.

Where it can become complicating sometimes is that we need the support and participation of Muslim communities in our effort to identify potential terrorists and to get ahead of or disrupt potential terrorist attacks.

And anything perceived — even if it's just a perception that the United States is anti-Islam, anything that makes that process of community engagement more difficult, that just adds to our challenges.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 How many times ISIS attacked US?
SOURCE	http://www.newsweek.com/islamic-state-america-attacks-744497
GIST	<p>The Islamic State militant group (ISIS) has been linked to two terror-related incidents in New York City in the past two months as its self-declared caliphate in Iraq and Syria has virtually disappeared.</p> <p>On Monday, several people were injured during an attempted terror attack at Port Authority—New York City's central hub for bus travel and one of the busiest spots in Manhattan. The suspected perpetrator, who was reportedly among those injured, was taken into police custody and transported to a local hospital.</p> <p>The suspect, Akayed Ullah, is a 27-year-old of Bangladeshi origin who lives in Brooklyn. According to some reports, Ullah was inspired by ISIS to attempt the attack, though an investigation is ongoing.</p> <p>Monday's incident comes a little more than a month after terror attack in lower Manhattan involving a truck left eight people dead. The suspect in that attack, Sayfullo Saipov, reportedly conducted it in "the name of ISIS."</p> <p>How many attacks has ISIS conducted in the U.S.?</p> <p>Since 2014, when ISIS declared a caliphate and captured the globe's attention, there have been seven lethal jihadist attacks in the United States, leading to 82 deaths, according to research from the New America</p>

Foundation. Not a single one of these attacks were believed to be coordinated by ISIS or one of its networks, but six were believed to be ISIS-inspired in "some form," David Sterman of the New America Foundation told Newsweek. "But in many of those [attacks] the question of whether ISIS was the key or central inspiration is up for debate," Sterman added.

The six lethal ISIS-inspired attacks include: an incident involving a truck in Manhattan that left eight dead on October 31, 2017; an incident in January 2017 in Denver, Colorado, in which a transit guard was shot and killed; a mass shooting at Pulse nightclub in June 2016 in which 49 people were killed; a mass shooting in San Bernardino, California, in December 2015 in which 14 people were killed; an incident in Moore, Oklahoma, in September 2014 in which the perpetrator beheaded a coworker; and a series of four killings from April 2014 to June 2014 across Washington state and New Jersey.

In total, there have been 12 violent (but not necessarily lethal) ISIS-inspired attacks in the U.S. since 2014, said Sterman.

The first time ISIS claimed responsibility for an attack in the U.S. was in May 2015 when two men—Elton Simpson and Nadir Soof—attacked a controversial exhibition featuring cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in Garland, Texas. One security guard was wounded in the incident and both assailants were killed. Prior to the incident, Simpson and Soof had been in contact with Junaid Hussain, a prominent virtual ISIS recruiter online, and Mujahid Miski, an American who had left the U.S. to fight with Al-Shabaab in Somalia but shifted his allegiance to ISIS later on. Sterman told Newsweek this incident was considered an event "enabled" by ISIS (rather than "inspired" or "directed"), given the individuals responsible actually had a direct interaction with people associated with the terror group online.

But even when ISIS has claimed responsibility for an attack, this doesn't necessarily mean it has trained or directed those responsible.

Relatedly, there's an important distinction to be made between ISIS-inspired and ISIS-directed attacks, Peter Mandaville, a professor of international affairs at George Mason University, told Newsweek.

"ISIS-inspired attacks are very difficult to detect and depend on developing and maintaining conduits of trust and communication between the U.S. authorities and communities vulnerable to the ISIS message," Mandaville said.

"A directed attack by ISIS is on the one hand more ominous—in the sense that it speaks to the groups ability to recruit, resource and coordinate overseas attacks—while also on the other hand more conducive to investigation since the individuals involved will often leave traces of their networks and connections that can then be pursued."

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Rising threat of lone-wolf terror
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/whats-behind-the-rising-threat-of-lone-wolf-terror-quicktake/2017/12/11/fefae6c4-dea6-11e7-b2e9-8c636f076c76_story.html?utm_term=.35d683b9cb96
GIST	<p>In the Sept. 11 attacks, al-Qaeda showed just how much destruction a well-organized terrorist network could wreak through coordinated strikes. Fifteen years later, a terrorist used a rented truck to kill 86 people on a seafront promenade in Nice, France, illustrating a different kind of threat that the West is increasingly facing: individuals inspired by the goals of militant Islamic groups but acting with little or no physical connection to them. These so-called lone-wolf terrorists are especially difficult to detect in advance, and thus to stop. Their violence is fueling debates in the U.S. and Europe over issues including gun control, online privacy and immigration from Muslim countries.</p> <p>The Situation</p> <p>An attempt to set off a bomb in New York's Times Square subway station Dec. 11 appeared to be an act of</p>

lone wolf. Such terrorists are generally defined as acting alone or with one or two others, without specific instructions, with a political motivation but no formal ties to an organization. Attacks by lone wolves, at least until recently, were relatively rare, accounting for 1.8 percent of terrorist attacks in the U.S. and 14 other industrialized countries between 1968 and 2010. Yet officials in the U.S. and many countries within the European Union say the risk of attacks by independent jihadists is rising, especially with the 2017 collapse of the proto-state established by militants of the group Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Sociologists and criminologists say lone wolves tend to harbor both personal and political grievances. More often than not, they display signs of mental instability, which may help explain their attraction to extreme causes and their inability to function within a larger group. One study found that a lone wolf is 13.5 times more likely to have a mental illness than a terrorist acting within an organization. Lone-wolf attacks often inspire copycats.

The Background

The term “lone wolf” stems from American white supremacists Alex Curtis and Tom Metzger, who in the 1990s encouraged fellow believers to commit violent acts independently to evade detection. White supremacy, Islamic militancy and opposition to abortion were the most common motivations for lone-wolf attacks in the U.S. from 1968 to 2007, according to one study, while nationalism and white supremacy topped the list in 14 other countries. Increasingly, jihadist groups have encouraged such assaults. As its base of operation in Afghanistan came under assault after the Sept. 11 attacks, al-Qaeda began calling on supporters to strike enemies whenever, wherever and however they could. With its staging grounds in Iraq and Syria diminished in recent years, the rival group Islamic State similarly began using social media to convey the same message. French scholars Gilles Kepel and Olivier Roy have engaged in a vigorous debate over whether jihadists homegrown in Europe are symptoms of the radicalization of Islam (Kepel’s view) or the Islamization of radicalism. Roy argues that they are modern-day nihilists who have glommed onto militant Islam to justify their rebellion against society.

The Argument

Because lone wolves don’t belong to organizations that can be infiltrated and monitored, they are difficult to combat. Some critics of existing countermeasures say law-enforcement agencies should have more leeway to conduct surveillance and act on it. A number of individual jihadists had drawn the attention of authorities at some point before their attacks. Other proposals include putting more pressure on social-media companies to block terrorist propaganda and, in the U.S., strengthening gun regulations. Some politicians advocate restricting Muslim immigration. Donald Trump did so in his successful campaign for the U.S. presidency and then, through executive order, barred or limited entry to the U.S. by people from six mostly Muslim countries. Each of those measures draws objections. Critics of boosting surveillance argue it could alienate and even radicalize Muslim communities, as could limiting immigration. Policing social media, skeptics warn, could lead to too much government control. Opponents of gun restrictions in the U.S. say they would violate a constitutional right to bear arms. Scholars who study lone-wolf terrorists suggest that a better understanding of them could help others spot them before it’s too late. One study of such attackers found that most broadcast their violent intentions in advance, in statements to associates, on social media or in various forms of protest.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 More ISIS militants surrender in Mosul
SOURCE	https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/scores-islamic-state-militants-surrender-security-forces-mosul/
GIST	<p>Nineveh (Iraqinews.com) Dozens of Islamic State militants have surrendered to security forces after the militant group was completely driven out of its last stronghold in Iraq, a security official said.</p> <p>“About 53 Islamic State terrorists gave up their weapons at al-Hadar district, 80 km west of Mosul, before handing themselves into joint Iraqi forces,” Brigadier General Saad Ahmed al-Janabi from the Interior Ministry’s Emergency Response Department told Anadolu Agency on Monday.</p>

“Of all, 25 IS militants were found to be Iraqis, who joined the militant group after the fall of Mosul city in 2014, while the other 28 militants are of Arab and European nationalities,” Janabi said.

“The local terrorists were handed to the cabinet’s homeland security apparatus, while the foreign militants were moved to the Counter Terrorism Service for deportation after coordination with the embassies of their countries,” he added.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 NYC explosion ‘attempted terror attack’
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/12/11/port-authority-explosion-reports-prompt-police-response-in-new-york-city.html
GIST	<p>A Bangladeshi man reportedly inspired by ISIS set off a pipe bomb inside New York's Port Authority bus terminal during rush hour Monday morning, sowing mass chaos but causing few injuries -- likely because the "attempted terrorist" detonated his "low tech device" prematurely.</p> <p>Akayed Ullah, 27, set off the "effectively low tech device" in a subway passageway just before 7:30 a.m., New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said in a news conference. Ullah suffered burns and wounds to his body and appeared to be the only person seriously injured in the pipe bomb explosion, authorities said.</p> <p>At least three other people suffered minor injuries, including ringing in the ears and headaches.</p> <p>“This is New York, the reality is that we are a target by many who would like to make a statement against democracy, against freedom,” Cuomo said.</p> <p>New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said: "This was attempted terrorist attack," adding that there was no additional threat at this time.</p> <p>Ullah's attack was inspired by ISIS, but had no direct contact with the terrorist group, law enforcement officials said. Authorities are investigating transit system video that captured the incident.</p> <p>Ullah strapped the crude pipe bomb to his body with Velcro and zip ties. The suspect allegedly packed the 5-inch metal pipe bomb and battery pack into the right side of his jacket, but the device exploded earlier than intended, law enforcement sources told The New York Post. The suspect told police he made the bomb at the electrical company where he works, The New York Post reported.</p> <p>A large police presence was spotted soon after the explosion in a section of Brooklyn that boasts a significant Bangladeshi population.</p> <p>An NYPD source on the scene told Fox News a device went off, and there was a bomb strapped to a person. Port Authority police took down the suspected bomber at gunpoint, Port Authority Police Benevolent Association tweeted.</p> <p>President Donald Trump was briefed on the incident, White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders tweeted.</p> <p>If the attack is confirmed to be ISIS-inspired, it would be the second ISIS-inspired attack in New York City in less than two months. An Oct. 31 terror attack killed eight people and injured 11 others after a man drove a rented truck into people walking and cycling on a bike path in Lower Manhattan.</p> <p>Several people wrote on social media shortly after the reports of an explosion that there was mass chaos at the bus terminal, some saying there was a "stampede" when the blast was heard.</p> <p>Port Authority is the largest bus terminal in the U.S., and about 232,000 commuters go through the area daily. The number of passengers is expected to jump to 337,000 daily by 2040.</p>

	The terminal reopened Monday morning after it was temporarily closed.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Putin visits Russia base in Syria
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/putin-makes-first-visit-to-syria-lauds-victory-over-isis-and-announces-withdrawals/2017/12/11/f75389de-de61-11e7-8679-a9728984779c_story.html?utm_term=.b57bc260e939
GIST	<p>MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday made a surprise visit to Russia’s Khmeimim air base in Syria, announcing an imminent drawdown of Russian forces in the wake of his declaration of victory in its intervention in the Syria war.</p> <p>In his first visit to the air base since Russian warplanes secretly flew to Syria in late 2015, Putin ordered his defense minister, Sergei Shoigu, to begin the “withdrawal of Russian troop contingents” to their permanent bases.</p> <p>But Putin left open the door to a continued Russian presence in Syria, saying that both Russia’s air base at Khmeimim and naval base at Tartus would keep operating. He promised further strikes in the future “if terrorists raise their head again” — an apparent reference to forces in Syria’s long civil war that sought to topple the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.</p> <p>“We will deliver such strikes on them that they have not seen yet,” he said in remarks to military personnel at the air base.</p> <p>Russia’s military intervention in Syria bolstered Assad’s government and gave Syrian forces a critical edge against rebel factions backed by the West and its Middle East allies. Iran, another key supporter of Assad, provided military advisers and other aid.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Sound Transit security ‘extra aware’
SOURCE	http://q13fox.com/2017/12/11/sound-transit-security-officers-extra-aware-after-attempted-terror-attack-in-new-york/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE – The attempted terror attack in New York City has had an impact here in Puget Sound.</p> <p>Sound Transit officials says they are beefing up security at stations, and advising security officers to remain extra aware.</p> <p>“You know, these incidents can happen anywhere,” said security expert Jeffery Slotnick.</p> <p>Slotnick says Seattle, and most other large cities, already have soft targets like concerts venues and sports stadiums. But he says changing up your habits is one way those seeking to stoke terror can find success.</p> <p>“I wouldn’t let events like what happened in New York this morning or three weeks ago discourage you from shopping, enjoying your life and having a good time with your family,” he said.</p> <p>Sound Transit says besides electronic security measures and security guards, passengers also play a part when looking out for suspicious items and people.</p> <p>An agency spokesperson says the public needs to keep their eyes peeled for things that look out of the ordinary, and speak out when something doesn’t seem right.</p> <p>The Seattle FBI office shared this statement with Q13 News:</p>

	The FBI currently has no specific, credible information that would suggest a pending threat to Washington state. However, the FBI remains vigilant and, as we do every day, will continue to work with law enforcement partners to detect, disrupt, and dismantle any threats that may emerge. We also maintain communication with FBI Headquarters to remain abreast of developments around the world that may inform our outreach efforts and investigative activities in the state of Washington.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Bomber's family blames police
SOURCE	https://nypost.com/2017/12/11/family-of-port-authority-bombing-suspect-is-outraged-at-investigators-tactics/
GIST	<p>The family of the alleged ISIS-inspired Port Authority bomber said they were “heartbroken” by the attack on Monday and blasted law enforcement agencies for what they claimed were heavy-handed tactics by investigators.</p> <p>“We are heartbroken by the violence that was targeted at our city today and by the allegations being made against a member of our family,” said the statement read by Albert Fox Cahn, the Legal Director for the NY Chapter Council for Islamic Relations.</p> <p>“But we’re also outraged by the behavior of the law enforcement officials who held children as small as 4 years old out in the cold and who pulled a teenager out of high school classes to interrogate him without lawyer, without his parents.”</p> <p>It was not immediately clear if the 4-year-old or the teenager were related to the suspect.</p> <p>The family continued to criticize the way the investigation was handled — even though the suspect, Akayed Ullah, allegedly launched a failed terror attack in a crowded city subway tunnel.</p> <p>“These are not the sorts of actions we expect from our justice system,” the statement read.</p> <p>“We have every confidence that our justice system will find the truth behind this attack and that we will in the end be able learn what occurred today.”</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/12 Houston man charged w/terror support
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/teen-charged-with-trying-to-help-isis-had-big-plans-authorities/
GIST	<p>HOUSTON -- A Houston 18-year-old has been arrested and charged with illegally distributing explosive-making information and attempting to support the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).</p> <p>The U.S. Justice Department said Monday that Kaan Sercan Damlarkaya, a U.S. citizen, was arrested on Dec. 8 following an undercover FBI operation. A statement says Damlarkaya said he intended to travel overseas and fight for ISIS and said he tried to get to Syria twice. He told agents he would commit a U.S. attack if efforts to travel overseas failed.</p> <p>It also says Damlarkaya provided to alleged ISIS supporters a formula for explosive Triacetone Triperoxide and instructions how to use it in a pressure cooker device containing shrapnel.</p> <p>According to the criminal complaint, Damlarkaya also gave instructions on how to build an AK-47 or AR-15 assault rifle from readily available parts to avoid detection from officials, reports CBS Houston affiliate KHOU-TV.</p> <p>According to the station, documents say he also talked about using a machete or Samurai sword and claimed to carry a knife in case he was stopped by authorities. Damlarkaya said he slept with a machete</p>

	<p>under his pillow in case his house was ever raided.</p> <p>Federal investigators said he explained that it was his "dream" to be a martyr and have the biggest explosion, KHOU reports.</p> <p>In November, according to court documents, Damlarkaya said, "If I buy a gun or supplies for a bomb, they (presumably law enforcement) will heat up pressure (j)ust like a few months ago when I was trying an operation but they found out."</p> <p>If convicted, he faces a possible 20-year maximum prison term. The U.S. has designated ISIS as a terrorist organization.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Target was chosen for Christmas posters
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/11/nyregion/explosion-times-square.html
GIST	<p>A would-be suicide attacker detonated a pipe bomb strapped to his body in the heart of Manhattan's busiest subway corridor on Monday, sending thousands of terrified commuters fleeing the smoke-choked passageways, and bringing the heart of Midtown to a standstill as hundreds of police officers converged on Times Square and the surrounding streets.</p> <p>But the makeshift weapon failed to fully detonate, and the attacker himself was the only one seriously injured in the blast, which unfolded just before 7:20 a.m.</p> <p>Law enforcement officials said the attacker, identified by the police as Akayed Ullah, 27, chose the location because of its Christmas-themed posters, a motive that recalled strikes in Europe, and he told investigators that he set off his bomb in retaliation for United States airstrikes on ISIS targets in Syria and elsewhere.</p> <p>It was the third attack in New York City since September 2016, and the second in two months, coming only weeks after eight people were killed in a truck attack along a Hudson River bike path. Like the earlier two, the attack on Monday appears to have been carried out by a so-called "lone-wolf" terrorist.</p> <p>The explosion on Monday morning echoed through the subway tunnels just off Times Square and filled parts of the Port Authority Bus Terminal with smoke as commuters fled. Even as smoke still filled the chamber, Mr. Ullah was subdued by Port Authority police officers.</p> <p>After he was subdued, Mr. Ullah was taken to Bellevue Hospital Center, where he was in serious condition with burns to his hands and abdomen, according to Daniel A. Nigro, the commissioner of the New York Fire Department. Three other people had minor injuries, he said.</p> <p>An immigrant from Bangladesh, Mr. Ullah came to live in Brooklyn through a visa program available to people who have relatives who are United States citizens.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/12 Freed prisoner: radicalization in Egypt jails
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/freed-prisoner-witnessed-radicalization-egyptian-jails-51732845?
GIST	<p>An Irish citizen recently acquitted after four years of being imprisoned in Egypt says he saw dozens of cellmates become radicalized and adopt views of the Islamic State group during his brutal captivity in overcrowded jails.</p> <p>Ibrahim Halawa, 21, was arrested after security forces broke up a 2013 sit-in protesting the army's</p>

overthrow of an elected Islamist president, and was released in October after being held in a half-dozen detention centers. His experience provides a unique perspective on how conditions inside Egypt's notorious prisons have degenerated during an unprecedented crackdown on dissent.

Born in the Dublin suburb of Crumlin to parents of Egyptian descent, Halawa had faced death by hanging on charges that ranged from inciting violence to murder, and says regular beatings with bars and metal chains during captivity led him and others to the brink of despair.

"In the beginning, no one had even heard of Daesh, but by the time I left, maybe 20 percent were openly supporting their ideas," he said, using the Arabic acronym for IS. "It could have been just talk — many of them were engineers, students and doctors who just wanted to get home to their families — but after all those years of being in jail with no explanation, many wanted revenge."

The extremist group boasts a powerful affiliate in Egypt's northern Sinai that has stepped up attacks in recent years, killing hundreds of security forces and civilians and expanding its reach to the mainland. Last month gunmen waving the group's black flag killed 300 people at a Sinai mosque in the deadliest terror attack ever carried out in the country.

Authorities have meanwhile waged a sweeping crackdown on dissent. Human rights groups say as many as 60,000 political prisoners are being held in Egyptian jails, mainly Islamist supporters of ousted President Mohammed Morsi but also several prominent secular activists.

Halawa said prison officials routinely described him and his cellmates as "political prisoners," even writing it on cells that were built to hold 10 men but were packed with dozens. The Egyptian government, which has branded Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood group a terror organization, denies holding any political prisoners.

"The prisons were packed — originally there were many members of the Muslim Brotherhood and April 6 (secular youth movement) but new people were always coming in," he said. "Toward the end, the guards became really rough with us because they saw people who left were returning still politicized, posting their views on Facebook."

Halawa was detained in the summer of 2013, just a few days after the army cleared out mass protests against the overthrow of Morsi, whose awkward one-year rule divided the country. Hundreds of protesters were killed.

Halawa and his sisters travelled regularly to Egypt for vacation, and had arrived that summer, just after he finished secondary school exams.

"I had no clue what was going on in Egypt at the time. I went to a few protests, including anti-Morsi ones, but everyone did back then, and I wanted to see all sides," he said. Only after friends were killed by the military did he accept an invitation to speak on stage at the main sit-in, where he said organizers were inviting anyone to address the crowd.

"The place was full of lots of simple people who were just against military rule, like farmers who earned (\$50) a month. And at the stage, they were desperate for speakers, especially foreigners," he said.

Halawa's Egyptian-born parents urged him and his sisters to avoid the demonstrations, but their curiosity got the better of them, he said. His father, Hussein, is the imam for Ireland's largest Muslim community, in Dublin, and both he and Ibrahim insist they have nothing to do with the Brotherhood.

"Our relatives in Egypt aren't political at all, and everyone knows this — even the prosecutors and police never accused us of being a pro-Brotherhood family. My sisters and I, by going to a simple protest, were the most politically involved in the family," he said. Authorities released his three sisters after three months' detention.

Halawa says he had a typical Irish childhood, even playing Gaelic sports like hurling. But as a devout Muslim of Egyptian descent who looks older than his age, he was seen by authorities as a threat. When they found him sheltering in a mosque during street clashes, it confirmed their suspicions.

Despite speaking only rudimentary Arabic at the start of his sentence, he was treated as an Egyptian in prison, beginning with the customary welcome beating guards referred to as "the party."

"The food was often rotten, although I luckily got packages from the Irish Embassy," he said. "It was pretty corrupt in there, the guards could accuse anyone of anything and the charges would stick." Prisoners were often punished when high-profile attacks were carried out against the state over the years, such as the assassination of the prosecutor-general in 2015.

"When that happened they gave us a thorough 'inspection,' dumping out all our things in the middle of the cell and throwing food and water on it," he said. "They also made us stand under the sun all day sometimes, but other times when they tried to get information they'd offer me extra food."

Human rights groups say torture and other abuses are rampant in Egyptian prisons. Egyptian officials deny any systematic abuse and say individuals are held accountable for any violations.

Toward the end of Halawa's imprisonment, the Brotherhood — previously known for organizing inmates in detention — had lost much of its pull inside jail, he said, with only die-hards sticking with the group.

"Most people wanted nothing to do with them after four years, they just wanted to get out so they'd avoid associating with them," he said.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/12 Afghan official: Taliban kill 3 soldiers
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/afghan-official-taliban-attacks-killed-soldiers-51732970?
GIST	<p>An Afghan official says Taliban insurgents have targeted military checkpoints in eastern Ghazni province in two separate attacks, killing three Afghan soldiers.</p> <p>Arif Noori, spokesman for the provincial governor in Ghazni, says that five other soldiers were wounded in the attacks, which took place early on Tuesday</p> <p>He also says the two districts where the attacks took place — Andar and Muqar — are now under the control of the Afghan security forces.</p> <p>Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the attacks in Ghazni, saying the insurgents were able to overrun the checkpoints and seize weapons and ammunition.</p> <p>The Taliban have stepped up attacks on Afghan security forces in recent years, capturing several districts across the country.</p>
Return to	
Top	

HEADLINE	12/12 Bangladesh condemns NYC terror attack
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/bangladesh-condemns-us-attack-citizen-suspect-51731154?
GIST	<p>Bangladesh's government condemned an attack on New York City's subway system, as it emerged that the suspect is an immigrant from the South Asian nation.</p> <p>"Bangladesh is committed to its declared policy of 'Zero Tolerance' against terrorism, and condemns</p>

	<p>terrorism and violent extremism in all forms or manifestations anywhere in the world, including Monday morning's incident in New York City," the government said in a statement.</p> <p>Police in Bangladesh said Tuesday that they were not in a position to comment on the suspect, identified by U.S. authorities as Akayed Ullah, a 27-year-old Bangladeshi immigrant. Ullah is accused of strapping a crude pipe bomb to his body and detonating it during rush hour Monday in an attack in which only he was seriously wounded.</p> <p>Ullah arrived in the United States in 2011 and the Department of Homeland Security said he's a lawful permanent resident of the U.S. who was living in Brooklyn. He came to the U.S. on a visa issued to him based on a family connection to a U.S. citizen.</p> <p>Law enforcement officials familiar with the investigation said Ullah had looked at Islamic State group propaganda online and told investigators he was retaliating against U.S. military aggression, but had no direct contact with the group. The people spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly about the blast.</p> <p>Ullah's family in the U.S. said in a statement that it was heartbroken and deeply saddened by the suffering the attack has caused.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/11 Officials: cops pinned suspect on ground
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/heroic-officers-pinned-nyc-terror-suspect-ground-removed/story?id=51728731
GIST	<p>Even as panicked commuters rushed toward them, four officers didn't hesitate to engage the man accused of detonating an explosive in the New York City subway system this morning, leaping on top of the suspect and removing the device before more damage could be done.</p> <p>The explosion occurred in an underground passageway near the Port Authority Bus Terminal, sending commuters scrambling to evacuate a major transit hub just blocks from Times Square. Despite the rush-hour crowds, only five people suffered minor injuries, officials said.</p> <p>The 27-year-old suspect, Akayed Ullah, is in the hospital, badly injured in the arm and torso from the device that went off in his arms, law enforcement sources said.</p> <p>Port Authority Police Department Officer Anthony Manfredini apprehended Ullah, with the help of three other officers: Sean Gallagher, Jack Collins and Drew Preston, Port Authority Police Benevolent Association President Paul Nunziato told ABC News Monday evening.</p> <p>Manfredini was stationed just outside the corridor where the detonation occurred. He "saw the panic and commotion," radioed for help and then entered the corridor with the three other officers, Nunziato said.</p> <p>"They engaged the suspect, who was on the ground, they handcuffed him, they saw wires, cellphone. They made a split-second decision to actually get on top of him and restrain him, and [Manfredini] actually removed the device off of his person before he could further detonate it," Nunziato said.</p> <p>Nunziato praised the officers for their quick action. "It's a split-second decision based on training. Training and having the moxie to get in there, to put your life on the line. ... I'm extremely proud. They couldn't have done it any better."</p> <p>He added: "Those four guys are heroes."</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/11 NY source: attack could have been worse
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/nyc-police-respond-reports-explosion-port-authority-bus/story?id=51714989
GIST	<p>A man accused of detonating an explosive in the New York City subway system this morning had the bomb strapped to him while he rode in from Brooklyn to Manhattan before the attack, a law enforcement source said.</p> <p>The explosion occurred in an underground passageway near the Port Authority Bus Terminal, sending commuters scrambling to evacuate a major transit hub just blocks from Times Square. Despite the rush-hour crowds, only five people suffered minor injuries, officials said.</p> <p>New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo called the underground explosion "one of our worst nightmares." New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio called it an "attempted terrorist attack."</p> <p>Authorities called the homemade device an "improvised low-tech explosive" that was attached to the suspect with hook-and-loop fasteners and zip ties.</p> <p>A law enforcement source said the bomb was built from a 12-inch-long pipe, black powder and rigged with a 9-volt battery and a wire that came from a Christmas light. Because it was strapped to the suspect, the assumption is he had been prepared to die a suicide bomber, the source said. The pipe had nails stuffed into it, the source said, and it had the ability to impose more injuries than it did.]</p> <p>"This could have been worse," a law enforcement source told ABC News.</p> <p>However, the pipe did not fully shatter and a 6-inch piece was discovered fully intact.</p> <p>The 27-year-old suspect, Akayed Ullah, is in the hospital, badly injured in the arm and torso from the device that went off in his arms, sources said. Ullah, originally from Bangladesh, told authorities he is self-inspired from ISIS online propaganda, sources said. Ullah told authorities no one directed him to carry out the attack and he talked about the plight of Muslims over the years, a law enforcement source said.</p> <p>Ullah entered the United States from Bangladesh seven years ago on a family-based visa and has an address in Brooklyn, sources said. The explosive was assembled in his apartment, sources said.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Suspect admits self-inspired ISIS online
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/nyc-explosion-suspect-made-statements-indicating-supports-isis/story?id=51718097&cid=clicksource_81_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>A man who allegedly detonated a small explosive in the New York City subway system this morning told authorities he is self-inspired from ISIS online propaganda, sources said.</p> <p>The suspect, Akayed Ullah, 27, was hospitalized after he was badly injured in the arm and torso from the device that went off in his arms, sources said.</p> <p>Ullah, originally from Bangladesh, entered the United States seven years ago on a family-based visa and has an address in Brooklyn, sources said, adding that he works as an electrician.</p> <p>From 2012 to 2015, Ullah held a for-hire vehicle license, which allows a driver to operate a black car, livery cab or limousine, the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission said. The license lapsed in March 2015 and was not renewed.</p> <p>New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said on CNN that the homemade device only partially detonated; he said the bomb was in a pipe, but the pipe itself did not explode. Authorities called it an "improvised low-tech explosive device" that was attached to the suspect with hook-and-loop fasteners and zip ties.</p>

	<p>The explosive device was assembled in his apartment, sources said.</p> <p>The device exploded at about 7:20 a.m. in a subway passageway between Times Square and the Port Authority Bus Terminal. Cuomo said hearing of a bomb in the subway is "one of our worst nightmares."</p> <p>Three people were injured, but none of their wounds appear to be life-threatening, the FDNY said.</p> <p>New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio called it an "attempted terrorist attack."</p> <p>The FBI is now searching several Brooklyn locations.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/11 Russia: partial troop withdrawal Syria
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/11/middleeast/putin-russia-syria-withdrawal/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a partial withdrawal of Russian troops from Syria during a visit to the war-torn country on Monday.</p> <p>Putin was met at Russia's Hmeimim air base by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad alongside Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, according to Russian state news agency Tass.</p> <p>"In two years, the Russian armed forces, together with the Syrian army, have defeated the most lethal group of international terrorists," Tass quoted Putin as saying.</p> <p>"In this regard, I have decided that a significant part of the Russian military contingent in the Syrian Arab Republic is returning home to Russia."</p> <p>Putin's visit to Syria comes just weeks after the two Presidents met for talks in the Russian city of Sochi. Putin has been one of the chief supporters of Assad's government, and Russia's intervention in the country's long-running civil war in 2015 helped tilt the balance of power back in Assad's favor.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/11 Suspect pledged allegiance to ISIS
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/11/us/manhattan-new-york-explosion-latest/index.html
GIST	<p>What you should know</p> <p>What happened: A man wearing a homemade device set it off at Port Authority bus terminal near Times Square.</p> <p>The suspect: Police named 27-year-old Akayed Ullah. He is of Bangladeshi descent and lives in Brooklyn.</p> <p>Injuries: Four people, including the suspect, were injured. None of those injuries are life-threatening, according to FDNY.</p> <p>Suspect pledged allegiance to ISIS</p> <p>While talking with authorities, Port Authority bus terminal explosion suspect Akayed Ullah pledged allegiance to ISIS, according to one law enforcement official with direct knowledge of the investigation.</p> <p>Authorities now have to investigate that claim.</p> <p>Ullah most recently did electrical work close to Port Authority along with his brother. That brother lives in the same apartment building as Ullah, according to law enforcement.</p>

As part of the normal course of an investigation, authorities want to speak with the brother and other family members.
 Another law enforcement source tells CNN that screws were found at the scene.

The Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC condemned today's terror attack in New York City. Suspect Akayed Ullah, 27, is a lawful permanent resident from Bangladesh, who arrived in the US in 2011.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 NYC terror suspect 'low tech' device
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/11/us/ny-suspect-what-we-know/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)An explosion Monday morning at the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Manhattan is, in the words of Police Commissioner James O'Neill, a "terror-related incident."</p> <p>The explosion happened on a walkway below ground near 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue. The suspect, Akayed Ullah, and three other people were injured.</p> <p>Information on what is known about the suspect is emerging.</p> <p>Who is he? -- Police identified the suspect as Akayed Ullah, a 27-year-old man. -- He lives in Brooklyn and is of Bangladeshi descent, two law enforcement sources said.</p> <p>Driver-for-hire license -- Ullah held a New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission for-hire vehicle driver's license from March 2012 through March 2015, NYC TLC Deputy Commissioner for Public Affairs Allan J. Fromberg said in a statement to CNN. -- That license lapsed and was not renewed in March of 2015, Fromberg said. -- Ullah was not licensed to drive a NYC yellow taxi, he said. -- "As taxi and for-hire vehicle drivers are independent contractors and not employees, I have no way of knowing whether he drove for any particular base, or whether he simply got the license but didn't drive at all," Fromberg said. "That said, since he held an FHV license, if in fact he did drive, we do know that it could not have been a yellow taxi."</p> <p>The device -- The suspect wore an "improvised low-tech explosive device attached to his body. He intentionally detonated that device," O'Neill said. -- Ullah told police he made the device at his workplace, according to a senior New York law enforcement official and a city official being briefed on the investigation. -- The device was a pipe bomb affixed to his person with a combination of Velcro and zip ties, John Miller, Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence and Counter Terrorism, said.</p> <p>Possible motive -- Recent Israeli actions in Gaza compelled Ullah to carry out the attack, a law enforcement source said. The suspect was upset, in his words, with the "incursion into Gaza," the source said, but did not elaborate on what incursion he may have been alluding to. Israel launched airstrikes this weekend against what it said were Hamas targets in Gaza after several rockets were fired out of Gaza towards Israel. This came amid widespread protests over President Trump's move to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. -- Asked if the suspect claimed connection to ISIS, O'Neill told reporters that "he did make statements" but refrained from disclosing what he said. -- Authorities are conducting background checks on Ullah.</p> <p>Neighbors</p>

	<p>-- Alan Butrico owns a residential building next door to the building where he says Ullah and his family live.</p> <p>-- Butrico said Ullah lives in the basement, his sister on the first floor and his brother on the top floor.</p> <p>-- Neighbors told Butrico they had heard fighting and yelling at Ullah's home during the past two nights.</p> <p>His injuries</p> <p>-- Ullah is in custody and is now at Bellevue Hospital. He is being treated for lacerations and burns to his hands and abdomen.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

Suspicious, Unusual

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 US flood risk 'severely underestimated'
SOURCE	http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42169462
GIST	<p>Scientists and engineers have teamed up across the Atlantic to "redraw" the flood map of the US. Their work reveals 40 million Americans are at risk of having their homes flooded - more than three times as many people as federal flood maps show.</p> <p>The UK-US team say they have filled in "vast amounts of missing information" in the way flood risk is currently measured in the country.</p> <p>They presented the work at the 2017 American Geophysical Union meeting.</p> <p>This mapping project includes areas across the US that are on river floodplains and those at risk of flash floods associated with heavy rainfall. It focuses on rivers and does not include areas at risk of coastal flooding.</p> <p>One of the researchers, Oliver Wing PhD from the University of Bristol in the UK and part of the flood-mapping organisation Fathom, spoke to BBC News ahead of this international gathering of Earth and planetary scientists. He said the new maps were based on "cutting edge science", simulating every river catchment area.</p> <p>The biggest issue, Mr Wing explained, is the how incomplete the network of river gauges is in the US. So he and his colleagues created a model based on decades of analysis of the way in which river systems behave.</p> <p>This model "fills in those data gaps," he told BBC News, meaning the probability of flooding can be worked out in every river catchment area.</p> <p>100-year flood</p> <p>Combining those probabilities with population and land-use data, Mr Wing said, revealed that "40 million people and \$5.5 trillion worth of assets" are within an area that has a 1% chance of flooding each year.</p> <p>When you combine population data with government flood maps, which are created by the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), "they only have 13 million people on that floodplain", said Mr Wing.</p> <p>This area with 1% chance of flooding every year - also called the 100-year floodplain - is nationally recognised as the area of high flooding risk. FEMA charts this area on its official flood hazard map, which is used to inform a national flood insurance programme.</p> <p>Flooding insurance is mandatory for the homeowners who have mortgages from federally regulated lenders. And for people whose homes were built before this law was passed, there is government support for their insurance policies.</p>

But FEMA "simply hasn't covered the whole of the USA" in its mapping, Mr Wing told BBC News. "Even in areas they claim to have studied, a lot of the smaller river reach has just been ignored."

Mr Wing added that the 100-year flood had the potential to cause \$1.16trillion worth of damage.

"That is if the 100-year flood happened everywhere at the same time, which is not going to happen in one period," he said. "But this gives you a rough idea of what has been put in harm's way."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 St Elizabeths DHS consolidation plan
SOURCE	https://federalnewsradio.com/facilities-construction/2017/12/st-elizabeths-dhs-consolidation-plan-where-do-we-go-from-here/
GIST	<p>Sitting at a plywood desk in what would become his successors' personal office, former Homeland Security Department Secretary Jeh Johnson uncovered a secret: the future DHS headquarters at the St. Elizabeths Hospital Campus in Southeast Washington was the perfect place to take in the nation's capital.</p> <p>"It rivals the view from up at Arlington [National Cemetery]," Johnson told Federal News Radio. "It's a great view of the city, it's a great panorama."</p> <p>Johnson knew he likely wouldn't be around to see the finished product, but with funding low and construction running behind, some wonder when that office view will ever be appreciated.</p> <p>In Federal News Radio's special report "St. Elizabeths DHS consolidation plan: Where do we go from here?" we look at the project's status today, how it went from a promising idea to a real estate albatross, and what steps need to be taken to reach a successful consolidation.</p> <p>Originally billed as a way to centralize leadership, improve operations, and lower rent checks, the Homeland Security Department's headquarters consolidation project is bleeding money, behind schedule and doing anything but bringing DHS components together.</p> <p>DHS said it must go back to the drawing board with the help of the General Services Administration to revise its Enhanced Consolidation Plan because it's no longer up to date. Meanwhile the Coast Guard — which operates under DHS — is warning against impractical plans to move more personnel into its headquarters on the campus. Meanwhile, frustrated congressional watchdogs are looking for answers, despite the fact lawmakers repeatedly failed for years to fully fund the Bush and Obama administrations' requests for funding to further the consolidation.</p> <p>Johnson knows his trivia about the campus — the movie "A Few Good Men" filmed exterior shots there — as well as what to look out for when visiting [deer ticks] — but he also has some wisdom about the consolidation plan.</p> <p>"The headquarters folks at DHS need a new office, the place they're in now at Nebraska Avenue was always supposed to be temporary, and it's substandard," Johnson said. "In the consolidation project, we have to be careful not to do something that will have more of an effect of separating the component leadership from their own workforce."</p> <p>He said while he wouldn't want DHS to insist that Customs and Border Protection or Federal Emergency Management Agency leadership be on the campus — which would dislocate them from the people they rely on on a daily basis — it was important to get some of the directorates to a new and centralized location.</p> <p>During his brief tenure as DHS Secretary, John Kelley testified in June on Capitol Hill that he recognized the need for consolidation because the move will not only save DHS billions of dollars over the next</p>

several years, but it will also increase productivity and improve time management.

“It takes me half an hour from where I sit most of the time to meet with CBP or ICE or whoever and obviously a half an hour to get back,” said Kelly, who now serves as White House chief of staff. “Sometimes I do that two [or] three times a day. It kills either my time management or their time management. I do the best I can not to inconvenience the people who work for me. It would be an advantage to be more or less in one place.”

One of the people likely to oversee the effort is GSA Administrator Emily Murphy.

During her October nomination hearing, Murphy told the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs that GSA is working with DHS on a revised project plan to present to Congress on the “long-going process” of getting the department into its new home.

“I’ve visited the campus, I’ve seen the beautiful building they’ve built for the Coast Guard,” said Murphy, adding her pledge to make it a priority to give DHS a headquarters to meet its mission. “I’ve seen the work that’s taking place in the secretary’s office. I believe that’s going to be completed early next year, and so we’ll be able to move more of the DHS employees out there.”

But Murphy’s statement reflects the disconnect around the project.

Information obtained by Federal News Radio shows that while the campus’s center building — the location of the secretary’s office — is fully funded and under construction, “excessive deterioration and structural repairs” caused the project to fall behind schedule and pushed the move-in date from mid-2018 to early 2019.

In fiscal 2014, DHS received \$35 million for the headquarters consolidation, and the following year it got a total of \$73 million — about \$58 million for the consolidation and \$15 million for support costs.

According to 2015 budget documents from DHS, the money “completes the IT infrastructure, IT equipment, outfitting, commissioning, decommissioning and move costs for the center building and the attached surrounding buildings comprising the center building complex.”

Information obtained by Federal News Radio shows that despite the funding, the center building’s construction is behind due in part to GSA’s misjudgment of just how badly the structure had deteriorated.

But the secretary’s office might be the least of DHS’s worries when it comes to the consolidation project.

The DHS consolidation plan directs the move of about 1,500 personnel from the Science and Technology Directorate (867), the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (331), and the Office of Health Affairs (249), into the Douglas A. Munro Coast Guard Headquarters Building.

According to an Aug. 28 letter from DHS Deputy Under Secretary for Management Chip Fulghum to Rep. Scott Perry (R-Pa.), housing OHA, DNDO and S&T “will provide potential direct rent savings to the Coast Guard of approximately \$12 million annually.”

“In addition, full execution of the Munro Optimization Project precludes any need to construct a separate new facility to house these components, with an estimated cost avoidance of over \$300 million in construction and tenant fit-out costs,” Fulghum’s letter stated.

The problem is that all three of those agencies’ leases expired in July 2017, and they are currently in a holdover status. What’s more, DHS and the Coast Guard answered questions about a move-in date in very different ways.

According to DHS Office of the Under Secretary for Management Spokeswoman Lauren Blakeney, the Munro Building is a “modern new facility with large open office floor plates that are eminently suited for

reconfiguration to support flexible workplace strategies and increased utilization.”

Blakeney said the Munro building’s maximum capacity without utility systems upgrades is 5,100 people.

“There is wide recognition throughout the commercial and government sectors that traditional office space layouts (as Munro was originally configured) no longer represent the state of the market, given the expense of real estate, the widespread acceptance of flexible workplace strategies, and the increasing importance of building utilization (number of persons per usable square feet) as a defining measure of how the real estate portfolio is being managed,” Blakeney said in an email to Federal News Radio. “Therefore the department is looking at options to optimize the configuration of the building, which may include making utility systems upgrades, to ensure efficient and effective use of space.”

But the Coast Guard doesn’t see the same opportunity as its parent agency.

In an email to Federal News Radio, Coast Guard Chief of Public Affairs Capt. Howard Wright said the Coast Guard had “been working closely with the DHS Munro optimization team to fully illuminate the practicalities and challenges of a 40 percent increase in occupancy in the Munro building.”

“Despite our close coordination, we remain at an impasse over several issues,” Wright said. “For example, there are many inherent inefficiencies in the design of the Munro Building that were dictated by environmental, ‘viewshed’ [geographic area that’s visible from a specific location] and historical preservation constraints associated with the St. Elizabeths location. This design includes 150,000 square feet of corridors that are deemed usable space by the optimization team that cannot practically be used as workspaces from a work environment and fire safety perspective. The optimization team seeks to exploit these and other theoretical space as justification for moving 1,400 additional employees into the building.”

Wright said the Munro building was programmed with a capacity for 3,700 people but its current occupancy is 3,800 workers.

In 2006, four years after its creation, DHS published its National Capital Region Housing Master Plan. In the plan, the department flagged a need for 7.1 million square feet of office space for DHS headquarters, with two-thirds of it on a secure campus.

One year later, DHS released its Consolidated Headquarters Colocation Plan. At the time, according to a 2014 Government Accountability Office report, in the National Capital Region alone, DHS employees were spread out in 85 buildings at 53 locations.

The colocation plan, GAO said, “is based on the idea that the consolidated headquarters campus serves as a central hub for leadership, operations coordination, policy and program management in support of the department’s strategic goals.”

The original three-phase plan cost \$3.26 billion, and proposed an eight-year build time with scheduled completion in 2016.

Between fiscal 2006 and 2014, the project received nearly \$500 million in congressional funding for DHS, and another \$1 billion through GSA’s congressional appropriations, GAO said, for a total of \$1.5 billion.

Most of the funding through 2013 was spent on the Coast Guard’s move to the campus.

In 2015, after project delays and cost overruns, Congress passed the Department of Homeland Security Headquarters Consolidation Accountability Act. The legislation required DHS to provide Congress with updated costs and schedule estimates. The law took effect in April 2016, and gave DHS until September 2016 to produce a report.

Congress still is waiting for that report, according to an aide with the House Committee on Homeland Security.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/12 Uruguay sets record: worlds biggest BBQ
SOURCE	http://time.com/5060046/uruguay-barbecue-world-record/?xid=homepage
GIST	<p>A small city in Uruguay has hosted the world's largest known asado, winning bragging rights over a rival barbecue hotspot in Argentina.</p> <p>Minas — about 65 miles northeast of Uruguay's capital Montevideo — put almost 200 cooks to work to break the Guinness world record. Together they grilled 16.5 tonnes of raw meat for a total of 14 hours, the BBC reports.</p> <p>But to steal the crown Minas still has to best the 9.16 tonne-cooked meat weight record set by the Argentine town of La Pampa in 2008. It did, by more than a tonne: Minas's meat weighed in at a whopping 10.36 tonnes after the grilling.</p> <p>"All this is not about the Guinness record, it's about beating the Argentines," one of the cook's told Agence France-Presse.</p> <p>Uruguay and Argentina have long had beef over who produces the best meat. Although both countries consider the gaucho, or horseman, a national symbol, Uruguay has around three times as many cows as it does people.</p>
Return to	
Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 China preps for NKorea refugee influx
SOURCE	http://time.com/5059992/china-north-korea-refugee-camps/?xid=homepage
GIST	<p>A Chinese county bordering North Korea is preparing for an influx of refugees, according to what appears to be a leaked document cited by the New York Times, revealing a rare acknowledgement that crisis or conflict could be on the horizon.</p> <p>The Times reports that the internal document, apparently leaked from the state-owned telecoms firm China Mobile and circulated on social media, said a company manager had inspected five sites being built to accommodate refugees in early December.</p> <p>The document says that China Mobile was asked to supply Internet services in the camp areas, located in three villages of northeast Changbai County and two other cities in Jilin province. Speaking anonymously, a local businessman told the Times that housing construction was already under way at several of the sites.</p> <p>A spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry told reporters he was unaware of the plan, according to the Times, but did not deny that such sites were being built. A company executive declined to discuss the issue, the Times reports.</p> <p>An expert cited by the Times said making such contingency plans was "absolutely reasonable," given Pyongyang's intensifying efforts to develop nuclear-tipped missiles capable of reaching the U.S. mainland. North Korea's increasingly frequent tests have provoked Washington and set the region on edge.</p> <p>"It is highly possible that there is a conflict between North Korea and the United States now," Zhang Liangui, a professor of international strategic research at the Communist Party's Central Party School, told the Times.</p> <p>Beijing's chief policy objective has long been to maintain stability on the peninsula, in order to avoid the very crisis it appears to now anticipate. For years this has meant exerting restrained economic pressure, such as enforcing some sanctions but declining to cut off commodities such as oil so as not to cause</p>

	collapse. Jilin province is already home to a large number of defectors and refugees from North Korea, and experts estimate that further instability or conflict could send as many as millions more across the Tumen River separating the two countries.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 ESC: 6th professor resigns after protests
SOURCE	http://crosscut.com/2017/12/evergreen-state-college-racial-protests-professor-resigns-olympia/
GIST	<p>The bloodletting at Olympia’s Evergreen State College continues in the aftermath of last spring’s race-related protests with the resignation of an African-American faculty member.</p> <p>As a condition of a settlement reached with the school, Naima Lowe, a media arts professor and a key figure in the protests, resigned on Dec. 6. Details of the settlement were not immediately available. She is the sixth college staffer to leave the college in the wake of racial tensions on campus.</p> <p>In a Facebook post, Lowe said she was “a ball of mixed emotions” after her resignation. “Mostly sadness that things couldn’t and didn’t work out differently,” Lowe said. “The students there continue to amaze me,” she continued. “I’ll miss getting to see more of their awesomeness up close and personal.”</p> <p>In a statement released on Monday evening, Lowe elaborated on her resignation, noting that “the issues that students of color, students with disabilities, low-income students, first-generation students, queer students and other marginalized students faced are real, complex and need to be addressed.”</p> <p>“I sincerely hope that Evergreen is able to move forward in its efforts to address those issues holistically and with an eye towards justice and equity,” she wrote.</p> <p>Rashida Love, who directed the on-campus First Peoples Multicultural Advising Service, left the college last month.</p> <p>Love, who is also African American, and Lowe were both threatened and harassed online during and after the protests, forcing them to take a leave of absence.</p> <p>In October, the school took disciplinary action against 80 students for their role in the protests and their violation of the student code. Some students received warnings, while others were suspended. According to Evergreen President George Bridges, the student code of conduct is currently under revision.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 NKorea nuclear test still shaking
SOURCE	http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42305161
GIST	<p>North Korea's nuclear test in September didn't just generate diplomatic shockwaves but also a 6.3 magnitude earthquake.</p> <p>Aftershocks have continued ever since, and on Saturday the US Geological Survey said it had detected two more, sparking significant debate about what might be going on underground.</p> <p>On 3 September, North Korea tested its most powerful nuclear bomb to date at its Punggye-ri test site in the mountains in its northwest.</p> <p>Pyongyang claimed it was a hydrogen bomb, which would have made it a device many times more powerful than an atomic bomb.</p>

	<p>Experts have expressed concerns the explosion might have been so powerful it could destabilise the surrounding mountains.</p> <p>According to the USGS, last weekend's tremors were "relaxation events". They measured a magnitude of 2.9 and 2.4.</p> <p>"When you have a large nuclear test, it moves the earth's crust around the area, and it takes a while for it to fully subside. We've had a few of them since the sixth nuclear test," an official told Reuters.</p> <p>The "movement of the earth's crust" is akin to the very definition of an earthquake and scientists say it is only to be expected in the weeks and months after an explosion of that magnitude.</p> <p>"These aftershocks for a 6.3 magnitude nuclear test are not very surprising," Dr Jascha Polet, seismologist and professor of geophysics at California State Polytechnic University, told the BBC.</p> <p>After any tremor of that size, aftershocks with declining magnitude are common, as the rock moves around and releases stress.</p> <p>The area around the quake site "experiences deformation, and this creates areas of increased and decreased stress, which affects the distribution of aftershocks," Ms Polet said.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/12 NKorea fortune from bitcoin mania?
SOURCE	http://money.cnn.com/2017/12/12/technology/north-korea-bitcoin-hoard/index.html?iid=hp-toplead-dom
GIST	<p>Speculators aren't the only ones cheering the runaway bitcoin boom -- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un may also be celebrating a windfall.</p> <p>In recent months, experts and officials say North Korea has been "mining" bitcoin, demanding it as ransom payment and outright stealing the digital currency.</p> <p>"It is a fact that North Korea has been attacking virtual currency exchanges," said Lee Dong-geun, a director with South Korea's state-run Korea Internet and Security Agency. "We don't know how much North Korea has stolen so far, but we do know that the police have confirmed the regime's hacking attempts."</p> <p>North Korean hackers targeted four different exchanges that trade bitcoin and other digital currencies in South Korea in July and August, sending malicious emails to employees, according to police.</p> <p>Bitcoin is a type of cryptocurrency that lives on computer servers. The virtual coins are "mined" by complex algorithms and recorded in a digital ledger.</p> <p>Experts say it's unclear how much bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies North Korea has amassed.</p> <p>"It's reasonable to assume some -- and the value is increasing significantly at the moment," said Bryce Boland, Singapore-based chief technology officer with cybersecurity firm FireEye.</p> <p>North Korea has repeatedly denied involvement in international hacking attacks. But it has made no secret of its interest in bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies.</p> <p>Last month, the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology touted a lecture from a bitcoin expert who came to North Korea to teach students about the technology behind the digital currency. The university is a high-profile institution where scions of the North Korean elite study.</p>

	<p>"Many excellent technical questions were asked about the inner working of bitcoin, its risks, and the measures taken to ensure security," the university said.</p> <p>Related: More than \$70 million stolen in bitcoin hack</p> <p>Boland said FireEye believes North Korea is "developing a significant number of people who understand bitcoin so they can expand their operations."</p> <p>That's likely to mean more attacks on exchanges and other cryptocurrency targets.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/11 Oil prices hit two-and-half year high
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-global-markets/oil-hits-two-and-a-half-year-high-on-pipeline-shutdown-stocks-take-breather-idUSKBN1E600R
GIST	<p>LONDON (Reuters) - Oil prices jumped to their highest in more than two years on Tuesday after the shutdown of a North Sea pipeline knocked out significant supply from an already tightening market.</p> <p>Brent crude futures, the global benchmark for oil prices, rose above \$65 a barrel -- their highest since mid-2015 -- after Britain's Forties pipeline was shut due to cracks as a cold snap sweeps the country.</p> <p>The Forties pipeline is important for the global oil market because the crude it carries normally sets the price of dated Brent, a benchmark used to price physical crude around the world and which underpins Brent futures.</p> <p>The shutdown comes as oil supply cuts by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) have helped chip away an excess of inventories built up following a global supply glut which began to emerge in late 2014.</p> <p>"Such a reaction (in prices) indicates that supply disruptions can no longer be ignored in tight markets," said Hussein Sayed, analyst at FXTM.</p> <p>U.S. crude oil futures CLc1 were last 0.5 percent higher at \$58.30 a barrel.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/12 NYC failed to destroy ID card records
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/nyc-immigrants-fear-raids-city-fails-destroy-id-card-records-n828541
GIST	<p>As President Donald Trump fights to deliver on his pledge to rapidly deport 2 to 3 million people living in the country without visas, there's a pile of almost a million documents with details of many of New York City's undocumented people — information they themselves willingly handed over that today risk leading federal immigration forces right to their front doors.</p> <p>More than a million of the country's estimated 11.1 million undocumented immigrants live in the city and its suburbs, many having worked there for decades and built families.</p> <p>The documents were the underpinning of an ambitious city identity card system — IDNYC — set up by the mayor in 2015 with the express aim of helping those who have fallen under the radar.</p> <p>Now that data might come back to bite.</p> <p>The program had launched with the aim of helping those it might now ensnare.</p>

People like Bianey Garcia, a 27-year-old transgender woman originally from Mexico who struggled to get a formal ID, and who could use New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's parallel identity card system to get a foothold in the city.

For the first time, immigrants without visas could use IDNYC to open bank accounts, sign leases and access city services.

New York City duly photocopied and scanned some 900,000 documents in the enrollment process, according to City Hall.

On a server in an undisclosed location in New York, the city's administration collected digital copies of 387,000 foreign passports, 346,000 driving licences and thousands of birth certificates, visas, military photo ID cards, consular documents and work permits.

New York's ID card program is part of a global wave of documenting the world's undocumented, as millions of people like Garcia entered the sort of digital databases that could now expose them in ways they had never anticipated.

One in eight city residents own an IDNYC — from de Blasio to the army of homeless veterans on its streets. Immigrants make up more than half of the now 1.2 million cardholders, according to an official survey in 2016.

Official figures show immigration arrests have already risen more than 40 percent nationwide under Trump — with raids hitting homes, schools, hospitals and court houses.

Federal data show 2,600 people have been arrested in New York City in the last year (seven each day) amid crackdowns that focus on "sanctuary cities," immigrant-friendly, liberal hubs such as New York that rely on incomers to prosper and grow.

Of those arrested, a quarter had no criminal record, marking a break from previous policy and spreading fear in a city where 37 percent are foreign born.

Advocates of civil liberties say the cache of documents amounts to a "deportation directory," vulnerable to hacks and open to seizure by agents of the Trump government.

De Blasio has repeatedly vowed to protect the city's estimated 500,000 undocumented immigrants and said the city will not turn over the information if requested.

"We did not know Donald Trump would be elected president," de Blasio told the Thomson Reuters Foundation at City Hall in recent weeks

"We worked under the world we knew then, which there was no such prospect of any such problem, based on what we knew. We worked very closely with the New York Police Department to figure out a secure card, and figure out what would be the right, secure steps to take."

De Blasio's team had from the get-go built in an option to delete all records by the end of 2016, but a duo of Trump-allied Republicans were one step ahead and, just after Trump won office, filed a lawsuit to stop the records from being erased.

Now cardholders fear their data could undo them.

"After the Trump election, there's not many people who want to have the card," said Garcia, a community organizer for Make the Road, which helped design the IDNYC program. "The only thing we can do is destroy that information and protect our community."

An identity card is key to daily life in the United States, if not a legal requirement. Without one, many

illegal immigrants do not use city services or access benefits for fear of stirring attention, according to the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU).

They also experience more crime, but many do not report it out of fear of being questioned by police about their legal status, said Betsey Plum, of the New York Immigration Coalition charity.

Before IDNYC was invented, undocumented immigrants had a range of other cards available but they lacked a common, widely accepted identity document that did not single them out as foreign.

When IDNYC launched in 2015, more than three times the predicted number signed up, according to the mayor's office.

Cardholders could use 12 banks and credit unions, access hospitals and libraries, and avoid a host of daily document struggles, such as when meeting teachers at their children's school.

Its popularity among native New Yorkers — keen on advertised perks such as free zoo and museum entry — also ensured that the card was widely held and carried no stamp of shame, according to the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA).

"One of the ways we've looked at this card is: How do you make the life of every New Yorker much easier? How can you create one key to all the different ways you need to access the city?" said acting MOIA Commissioner Bitta Mostofi.

More than a dozen U.S. cities — including Philadelphia, Chicago, Dallas and Boston — are considering their own municipal identity cards, and are looking for guidance from New York.

Some continue to propose databases to rival the one New York is desperate to delete, and privacy campaigners say it is time to learn lessons.

Immigrant rights groups, city politicians and the NYCLU had all cautioned in 2014 that retaining data risked fuelling an immigration crackdown, should a nativist administration come to power.

"We are seeing the nightmare scenario ... that someone would file a lawsuit or create some kind of barrier to the city deleting these records," Johanna Miller, advocacy director at the NYCLU, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Miller said the only way to keep records safe was not collect them in the first place. Some documents are riskier than others. Long expired passports ring instant alarm bells as they may single out immigrants likely to have overstayed their visas.

New York was alone in 10 U.S. ID card programs — including San Francisco and neighboring Newark, New Jersey — in storing applicants' personal data, according to a report by the charity the Center for Popular Democracy in 2015.

Alvaro Bedoya, executive director of the Center on Privacy and Technology at Georgetown Law, said cities can protect their databases from hacks but have less defense against ICE's "very expansive" powers to subpoena documents.

Pam Dixon of the World Privacy Forum, a research group on privacy and technology, said they "warned and warned" the city.

"I remember cautioning against the collection of these records and warned that the data would eventually be misused politically," she said. "We were told this 'kill switch' was going to be put in and this would save everything. But we have to understand that politics change."

Since the card program began, the city has given law enforcement agents personal IDNYC data for 13

	people, according to MOIA. The city said it has received no such requests from federal immigration enforcement.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Rising rents an issue in Spokane Co.
SOURCE	http://q13fox.com/2017/12/11/rising-rents-becoming-an-issue-in-spokane-county/
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — Higher rents are becoming an issue in Spokane County, where a new report says half of renters are spending over 30 percent of their income on rent.</p> <p>Rents in the Spokane market have increased notably over the past year and a half. That’s according to Terri Anderson, co-director of the Spokane Tenants Union.</p> <p>The Spokesman-Review reports that rents in Spokane are rising while wages remain stagnant.</p> <p>Besides stagnant incomes, Spokane is facing another factor that’s driving up rent: low apartment vacancy and high demand.</p> <p>Spokane has a 2.9 percent apartment vacancy rate with an average rental rate of \$886, according to a September 2017 report by the University of Washington’s Runstad Center for Real Estate Studies.</p>
Return to Top	

Crime, Criminals

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	12/12 SPD shoots armed robbery suspect
SOURCE	http://www.king5.com/article/news/local/armed-robbery-suspect-shot-and-killed-by-seattle-police/281-498795257
GIST	<p>One man is dead and a woman is in custody following an officer-involved shooting in North Seattle late Monday night.</p> <p>The incident began shortly after 10 p.m. when the couple robbed a store at the Northgate Mall, according to spokesperson Detective Mark Jamieson.</p> <p>The woman was taken into custody at a store along Holman Road.</p> <p>The man was spotted and immediately fled the scene in a vehicle at high speeds.</p> <p>Seattle police pursued the man from the Greenwood neighborhood all the way to Magnuson Park. During the pursuit, the man fired shots at the direction of police.</p> <p>The pursuit ended when the man crashed his car at the park. Police officers fired shots, striking the man.</p> <p>He was transported to Harborview Medical Center by Seattle Fire, but died from his injuries.</p> <p>No officers were injured the shooting.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 King Co. bans youth solitary confinement
SOURCE	http://crosscut.com/2017/12/county-bans-solitary-confinement-for-young-detainees/
GIST	King County plans to treat its youth inmates a little less like adults.

	<p>The county council on Monday, in a 7-0 vote, decided to ban the use of solitary confinement, one of the harshest disciplinary measures employed by corrections systems, for inmates age 17 and younger. The council also passed a mandate that young people held in its adult jail in Kent will receive educational services that equal what is being offered at its youth jail in the Central District.</p> <p>Councilmember Kathy Lambert, who opposed the legislation in committee, and Councilmember Larry Gossett, one of the bill's sponsors, were absent.</p> <p>Monday's vote was spurred, at least in good part, by a recent lawsuit. But the county is also in the midst of trying to figure out how to do a better job overall with youth offenders.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/11 Romanians admit racketeering, skimming
SOURCE	http://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/romanian-nationals-admit-to-racketeering-conspiracy-atm-skimming/d/d-id/1330604
GIST	<p>Seven Romanian nationals pleaded guilty in connection with an ATM skimming scheme and RICO conspiracy, in addition to other crimes.</p> <p>Romanian nationals pleaded guilty in federal court for their involvement with an ATM skimming scheme and a conspiracy to conduct enterprise affairs through racketeering activity, which is also commonly known as RICO conspiracy, the DoJ reported today.</p> <p>The defendants, who range from 19 to 27 years old, were indicted in May 2017 with five other defendants whose whereabouts are currently unknown. All but one were members of the Hornea Crew and engaged in ATM skimming. Over 18 months, they installed skimming devices and made unauthorized withdrawals in seven states, including Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and New Hampshire.</p> <p>Six defendants pleaded guilty to RICO conspiracy and conspiracy to use counterfeit access devices. Three also pleaded guilty to aggravated identity theft and money laundering conspiracy; of those, two pleaded guilty to possession of device making equipment and one pleaded guilty to money laundering conspiracy. One pleaded guilty to both conspiracy to use counterfeit access devices and money laundering conspiracy.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/11 PCSO: 3rd Graham suspect turns self in
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/841794/teens-detained-after-graham-shooting-scheduled-for-release/
GIST	<p>The third suspect in last week's shooting near Graham-Kapowsin High School has turned himself into authorities.</p> <p>The Pierce County Sheriff's Office reports that a 16-year-old male turned himself into police at Remann Hall in Tacoma — a juvenile detention center. The sheriff's office says that he will be booked on a charges of Assault 1 and Drive By Shooting.</p> <p>Two other teens who were detained in connection to the shooting were released Monday, the The News Tribune reports.</p> <p>The Pierce County Prosecutor's Office says detectives will continue to gather more information, but no charges will be filed against the two 17-year-old boys at this time.</p> <p>The two boys were released because the Pierce County Prosecutor's Office doesn't have "everything we need" to charge them, spokesperson James Lynch told the Tribune. The two teens were arrested last week after a shooting near school grounds injured two students.</p>

	Deputies say the shooting occurred about 40 yards off of school grounds. Students had gathered after school for a fistfight. The News Tribune reports the fight never happened; someone leaving in a car fired shots into the crowd. Two male students were shot and taken to Tacoma General Hospital for surgery.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Tacoma: arrests in construction crane protest
SOURCE	http://komonews.com/news/local/2-arrested-after-construction-crane-protest-in-tacoma
GIST	<p>TACOMA, Wash. -- Two protesters were arrested after spending the day Monday locked in the tower of a construction crane. It was part of a larger demonstration against the liquefied natural gas plant being built on the Tacoma tide flats. They came down peacefully at the end of the construction work day.</p> <p>Steve Way says he and Carlo Voli climbed the crane to garner publicity for their cause. "People have maybe never heard about it," said Way from his perch 60 feet up. "Don't know what's going on here. Find out what's really going on here because they're building this facility and there's no need for their product."</p> <p>But Puget Sound Energy said the plant is going to produce LNG for a shipping company to replace highly polluting bunker oil and to have a store of natural gas to serve the region.</p> <p>As to the protest PSE said, "While we respect everyone's right to express their opinions, safety is our priority. Breaking into a heavy construction site and crawling on heavy equipment is extremely dangerous to both the trespassers and first responders."</p> <p>Protesters are undeterred believing PSE didn't get all of the necessary permits. Puyallup tribal council member Sylvia Miller said, "We are obligated to protect and preserve our lands and our waters and this plant is not doing that."</p> <p>"The community is upset," said Puyallup tribal council member James Rideout. "That's why they're locked down to this facility. They understand the magnitude to what this facility can cause."</p> <p>Protesters say they're even willing to do jail time. Cynthia Linet and Marilyn Kimmerling went on trial Monday arrested at a demonstration last May. "As long as my animals are fed I feel like it's my duty. If it helps to get the word out," Kimmerling said.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Everett: 5 teens arrested in shooting
SOURCE	http://www.kiro7.com/news/north-sound-news/1-dead-1-injured-in-everett-shooting/660106818
GIST	<p>EVERETT, Wash. - A 54-year-old woman was killed and her 17-year-old son was injured in a shooting near south Everett last week.</p> <p>Authorities say they've arrested five teenagers in the shooting.</p> <p>The KIRO 7 assignment desk first heard about the shooting at the Village Green Mobile Home Park in the 12600 block of Gibson Road shortly before 5 a.m. on Thursday.</p> <p>The victim's daughter identifies her mother as 54-year-old Julie Knechtel; her brother who was shot is Michael Young.</p> <p>Snohomish County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman Shari Ireton says the two victims lived on the same property, but the teen lives in an outbuilding.</p> <p>Ireton said dispatchers received two 911 calls at about 4:45 a.m. One was about a burglary attempt and the</p>

	<p>other was about multiple gunshots fired. One call was from the victim and the other was from a neighbor.</p> <p>When deputies arrived, they found two victims with gunshot wounds. The woman died at the scene and the teenager was transported to Providence Regional Medical Center with a gunshot wound to the shoulder. He is expected to recover.</p> <p>Five teenagers are being held on \$500,000 bail each on Monday, according to MyEverettNews.com. They are awaiting charges of first-degree murder, according to reports.</p> <p>Late Thursday, a 16-year-old boy was booked into the Juvenile Justice Center for first-degree murder, burglary and assault. MyEverettNews.com found court records that show Bryan "B-Money" Rodriguez-Hernandez, 16, robbed the woman's sons at gunpoint over drugs last year.</p> <p>On Friday, Snohomish County detectives said had enough probable cause to arrest another 16-year-old, Larry Dontese Dorrough, for first-degree murder.</p> <p>Detectives needed to identify three additional persons of interest, two males and female, who they believe may have information related to the investigation. But as of Sunday, authorities said all suspects involved in the shooting were in custody.</p>
<p>Return to</p> <p>Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/11 Renton PD: groping, attempted luring
SOURCE	http://q13fox.com/2017/12/11/man-accused-of-groping-attempting-to-lure-children-at-renton-walmart/
GIST	<p>RENTON, Wash. — 'Tis the season for holiday distractions. The shopping. The people. The kids running around looking for toys.</p> <p>"It's been my experience that sexual predators look for the very best opportunity that they can find in order to encounter children and this time of year—in stores just like Walmart—where families are shopping for the holidays—it's a great opportunity for people with that mindset," said Commander David Leibman with the Renton Police Department.</p> <p>Sunday afternoon was the perfect opportunity for this man.</p> <p>Police are calling this black male, likely in his 30s, a suspect — after allegedly assaulting a 10-year-old girl.</p> <p>"She said that a man had followed her up and down a couple of aisles before eventually she and her other 10-year-old cousin were in the aisle all by themselves," said Leibman. "The man came up, groped her, made some comments about paying or buying her a board game so that they could play and then eventually went away."</p> <p>That incident was not caught on camera. But the concern is very real for Renton police who say the suspect could strike again.</p> <p>"I have no doubt that this person right now is out there doing something very similar to what we saw happen yesterday," said Leibman. "How far he takes these encounters--we don't know, but we just don't want to find out the hard way."</p> <p>When police reviewed the Walmart surveillance video they noticed the same suspect also following other children up and down aisles.</p> <p>In another incident, he appears to wait for a little girl, approximately the same age, looking for toys by herself. In the video--the suspect continues to look around--appearing to wait to approach until she was</p>

	<p>alone.</p> <p>"At this point, not only do we want to identify the suspect, we want to know what happened with this female, too, because in the video it looks like he's following her away."</p> <p>An alarming find. Then came a third report--all from inside this Rainier Avenue Walmart.</p> <p>This time the suspect left and came back – parents telling Walmart security that around 9 o'clock Sunday, a man with the same description, followed their 4-year-old, offering her candy to come with him.</p> <p>Disgusting allegations that have plenty Renton shoppers on high alert.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	12/12 School security changed w/Sandy Hook
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/sandy-hook-shooting-anniversary-how-schools-have-changed-security-n827371
GIST	<p>Buzzers for the front door. Security cameras. Bulletproof glass.</p> <p>These are among the physical reinforcements that have become more common in schools across the country in the five years since the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary, as more and more schools try to address security concerns.</p> <p>Experts say the Dec. 14, 2012, massacre in Newtown, Connecticut — which left 20 children and six staff members dead — prompted the wave of alterations to school buildings.</p> <p>"After Sandy Hook, you saw a tremendous increase in the number of buzzer systems," said Dr. Amy Klinger, director of programs and co-founder of the Educator's School Safety Network, a nonprofit that supports safer schools. By requiring that visitors be buzzed in by a receptionist or other staff member, schools say they're adding a layer of control about who can gain access.</p> <p>Adding security features comes with challenges, though: They can be costly for cash-strapped schools — Klinger said the buzzer system alone can run about \$5,000 — and they can make school feel less than inviting.</p> <p>"We want to always be looking at that balance between helping kids feel safe at school, and be safe at school, but not feeling like they're going to school in a prison environment," said Mo Canady, executive director of the National Association of School Resource Officers, a nonprofit for school-based law enforcement officers.</p> <p>That was the goal in Newtown, where the school district demolished the original Sandy Hook Elementary out of respect for the victims. Last year, a new school opened elsewhere on the same property; Consigli Construction Co., which built the \$50 million school, has billed it as a national model for the "school of the future."</p> <p>The new Sandy Hook school has a nature theme, with two "treehouse spaces" — glass-enclosed wings that jut out over the school's expansive courtyard. Inconspicuous security features, such as doors that can be easily locked from the outside or inside, bullet-resistant windows, and bioswales outside the building that absorb water for plants while also keeping visitors at a distance, are sprinkled throughout the property.</p> <p>"The new building was very thoughtful and very sensitive," Matthew Consigli, president of Consigli Construction, said. "We wanted to make sure that we introduced and implemented security features that aren't readily apparent to the children."</p> <p>Experts point out that structural reinforcements are only part of the solution, and in some cases, may even</p>

detract from other crucial safety measures. They urge schools to combine security equipment with other tools, like regular lockdown drills, having a school crisis team that holds meetings throughout the year, and keeping open lines of communication with local first responders.

"Many people have just pursued security equipment and hardware as a quick fix, something that's visible and tangible that they can point to to parents and local media," said Kenneth S. Trump, president of National School Safety and Security Services, a Cleveland-based consulting firm that helps schools prevent and prepare for crises. "Oftentimes, the best security is invisible."

Lockdowns, in particular, can be effective, as a shooting last month in California showed. When a gunman in the Rancho Tehama Reserve killed four people and targeted an elementary school, he was thwarted from getting into the school after staff initiated a lockdown, authorities said.

"It appears that because he couldn't make access to any of the rooms — they were locked — that he gave it up and re-entered the vehicle and then went on his killing spree and took it to the streets," Tehama County Assistant Sheriff Phil Johnston said. "So I really want to say that the quick action of those school officials, there is no doubt in my mind based on the video that I saw, saved countless lives and children."

But facility upgrades don't always stop tragedy altogether. A shooting last week in a New Mexico high school killed two children despite teachers going on lockdown and pushing a panic button as the gunman was shooting, according to local reports.

And even Sandy Hook had some physical barriers in place: The gunman, Adam Lanza, however, was able to easily breach the buzzer system there.

School safety consultants all stress that mass shootings in schools are exceedingly rare. Still, they urged administrators to focus as much on preventing an attack as to what their response would be.

"The only way you're going to reduce this is training, and that training has to incorporate not only faculty, but parents," said Heidi Wysocki, co-founder of First Defense Solutions, which offers training on how to minimize casualties in active shooter situations. She cites the "Know the Signs" programs from Sandy Hook Promise, the nonprofit led by several families of victims in the school shooting, as a good guide.

While training staff members and drilling students on how to handle an attack is important, they said it shouldn't be at the expense of preparing for a more likely emergency: what to do if a noncustodial parent tries to pick up a child, for example, or if a student has a serious health emergency.

"We are doing active shooter training to the exclusion of everything else," Klinger said. "Statistically, you're probably not going to have an active shooter."

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Teens arrested in shooting released
SOURCE	http://www.kiro7.com/news/south-sound-news/teens-arrested-in-shooting-outside-of-graham-kapowsin-high-to-be-released-for-now-without-charges/662423313
GIST	<p>Two 17-year-old boys suspected of taking part in a shooting that wounded two students outside Graham-Kapowsin High School earlier this month are expected to be released from custody Monday without being charged.</p> <p>The Pierce County Prosecutor's Office announced the news in a statement released by spokesman James Lynch.</p> <p>"The investigation is still ongoing with a number of detectives still working to get more information," Lynch said. "In the meantime, the two teens will be released at some point today, NCF, which means no charges filed pending further investigation."</p>

The two were arrested last week following the Dec. 5 incident near the school.

Sheriff's deputies said a group of teenagers had gathered after the final school bell for purposes of engaging in a fistfight. The fight never took place, but someone in a car leaving the gathering fired shots into the crowd. Two boys, 17 and 16, were hit but survived.

The shooting resulted in a large police response at the Pierce County school.

A judge had ordered the pair held for 72 hours without charges while detectives investigated. The clock ran out on that hold Monday.

"We don't have everything we need to support the charge, and the 72 hours is up," Lynch told The News Tribune in an interview.

Deputies still are seeking a third teen for questioning.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	12/11 Tanzania president pardons child rapists
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SOURCE	http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42309501
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GIST	Children's rights activists have condemned the pardon of two child rapists by the Tanzanian president.
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Kate McAlpine, director of the Arusha-based Community for Children Rights, told the BBC she was "horrified but unsurprised".

John Magufuli made the pardon in his independence day speech on Saturday.

Singer Nguza Viking, known as Babu Seya, and his son Johnson Nguza, known as Papii Kocha, were pardoned for raping 10 primary schoolgirls.

The president selected a group of prisoners to be released, who he said had corrected their behaviour.

Ms McAlpine said the pardon illustrated Mr Magufuli showed a "lack of understanding about violence against children". She linked this latest speech to his June announcement where he banned pregnant schoolgirls from returning to school.

"He has a blind spot when it comes to recognising children as victims. Pregnant schoolgirls are pregnant because they are victims of violence."

Children's rights activist Helen Kijo Bisimba told the BBC's Munira Hussein in Dar es Salaam that "forgiving those criminals will add more pain to the family and parents".

She added that she is campaigning to change the constitution to ban the president from doing the same thing again.

Child rape cases in Tanzania tend to be dealt with between families, or rapists have been known to pay off police and court staff, Ms McAlpine said.

"It's extremely rare for child rape cases to get to court in Tanzania," she said, and even rarer for the culprits to get life sentences.

Despite this, Viking and Nguza were sentenced to life in prison for raping 10 girls in 2003 aged between six and eight years who were pupils at a primary school in the Tanzanian city Dar es Salaam.

	They had served 13 years of their sentence when they were released on Saturday.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Arrest: woman made threats on flight
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/southwest-airlines-valerie-curbelo-passenger-arrested-after-making-threats-on-flight/
GIST	<p>SACRAMENTO -- A woman was arrested and charged after she threatened to kill fellow passengers on a Southwest Airlines flight from Portland to Sacramento. The chaotic scene was captured on video that a fellow passenger sent to CBS Sacramento.</p> <p>The incident on Saturday began after a woman attempted to smoke in the airplane bathroom and alter the smoke detector, according to airline officials.</p> <p>The passenger who shot the video said the woman was ordered back to her seat but began yelling irrationally, threatening to kill everyone on board, and demanding that the plane land. He said she pushed a flight attendant and had to be physically restrained by passengers and crew for the remaining 30 minutes of the flight.</p> <p>Valerie Curbelo, 24, was arrested at the gate when the plane landed, and she was taken to Sacramento County Jail and charged with making criminal threats.</p> <p>Southwest Airlines sent a statement to CBS Portland affiliate KOIN-TV saying 136 customers were onboard the flight, which landed safely following the incident. The company said a passenger "violated federal laws by both smoking onboard an aircraft and by tampering with a smoke detector in an aircraft restroom."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Italy: man drove into pedestrians to kill
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/reports-man-hit-pedestrians-italy-aimed-kill-51717890
GIST	<p>An Italian man who drove his car last week into pedestrians near a Christmas market in the northern town of Sondrio had been aiming to kill.</p> <p>Sondrio Prosecutor Claudio Gittardi confirmed Italian media reports Monday the suspect is being investigated for wanting to carry out a massacre. The car struck and seriously injured a woman Saturday at an outdoor skating rink near the Sondrio market before crashing into a pillar.</p> <p>Two others who had been strolling in the pedestrian-only square suffered light injuries in the crash, which was originally blamed on drunk driving.</p> <p>"As things stand, the incident seems to have been determined by personal dynamics and not with the aim of terrorism," according to police who investigated, Gittardi said in an email to The AP. The prosecutor didn't elaborate.</p> <p>ANSA said the suspect, 27, when he was arrested at the scene, said that he "should have killed more" people.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	12/11 Felon accused of illegal gun exports
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/us-man-accused-illegal-gun-exports-europe-

	australia-51723200
GIST	<p>A fugitive captured in Mexico is due in a U.S. courtroom Tuesday on accusations that he orchestrated an elaborate scheme to export handguns to countries with restrictive gun laws.</p> <p>Eric Daniel Doyle was indicted by a grand jury on federal firearms charges in 2015, but fled before he could be arrested and eluded authorities for more than two years.</p> <p>Authorities allege the 37-year-old Kalispell man used the internet to set up handgun sales to customers in Australia, Norway, Denmark and Sweden. The weapons were shipped through the U.S. Postal Service.</p> <p>Doyle pleaded not guilty during an initial court appearance last week. His attorney, Andrew Nelson, told The Associated Press that he had no comment on the case ahead of Tuesday's detention hearing in U.S. District Court in Missoula, Montana.</p> <p>U.S. Magistrate Judge Jeremiah Lynch will decide if Doyle remains a flight risk. He faces 44 counts of illegal gun exports and related crimes.</p> <p>Details on the allegations against Doyle were unsealed by a federal judge following his capture Nov. 8 in the Mexican state of Sonora by a joint operation between local authorities and the U.S. Marshals Service.</p> <p>Authorities allege that in 2014, at least 14 firearms — primarily high-caliber handguns — were shipped by Doyle to customers in Australia, Norway and Sweden, court documents show. The suspects also attempted to export at least one handgun to Denmark and four more to customers in Australia.</p> <p>Court documents contained only the initials of the buyers. It was unclear if U.S. authorities had reached out to their counterparts in the destination countries to inform them of the sales.</p> <p>In most cases, the serial numbers on the weapons had been obliterated, according to the 2015 indictment. Many of the guns had been obtained through a "straw purchaser" who would buy firearms from a licensed dealer on Doyle's behalf, according to the indictment.</p> <p>Doyle had been prohibited from possessing firearms because of felony convictions in Illinois in 2006 on drug and burglary charges, according to public records.</p> <p>Four alleged accomplices were previously sentenced. Among them was Doyle's uncle, Jay Isles, also of Kalispell.</p> <p>In sentencing those defendants last year, U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy said the case had far-reaching implications because the alleged scheme's customers resided in countries with highly-restrictive gun laws. Molloy rejected plea deals that had been offered by prosecutors for everyone in the case but Doyle, saying they were too lenient.</p> <p>"This is the most obvious conspiracy that I have seen on 20 years on the bench," Molloy said in his sentencing order.</p>
Return to Top	

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[Return to Top](#)