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RAOUL, U.S. SECRET SERVICE HOST TRAINING AIMED AT PREVENTING TARGETED VIOLENCE AGAINST HOUSES OF WORSHIP

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul partnered with the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) on Wednesday in hosting a virtual training designed to prevent targeted acts of violence at houses of worship. The event is part of a series of trainings on behavioral threat assessment that are presented by the NTAC to help prevent mass casualty attacks.

Participants taking part in Wednesday's training included clergy members, religious staff and members of law enforcement. The Attorney General's office and the NTAC have collaborated since 2019 to provide threat assessment trainings to public and private entities around Illinois. Using research and case studies from past mass attacks in public spaces, the trainings provide recommendations to help faith leaders, educators, law enforcement officials, prosecutors and others identify, assess and intervene with individuals who exhibit concerning or threatening behaviors.

"Increased anti-Semitism and attacks targeting places of worship have highlighted the work needed to keep our public spaces safe from gun violence," Raoul said. "As part of my commitment to addressing gun violence in all forms, I have partnered with the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center to ensure community members are equipped with the tools and resources to identify potentially threatening behavior before it turns violent."

The training highlighted past mass tragedies at houses of worship in the United States. NTAC officials also presented relevant findings and recommendations based on the NTAC's latest research on targeted violence in the U.S. Additionally, participants learned about the role communities can play in using a multidisciplinary approach to identifying, assessing and intervening with individuals exhibiting concerning or threatening behaviors as early as possible.

For more than 20 years, the NTAC has conducted research on the thinking and behaviors of those who commit targeted acts of violence in an effort to prevent future acts. The NTAC has found that attacks took place in a variety of locations, including businesses and workplaces, schools, places of worship, military bases, open spaces, housing complexes, and on forms of transportation. In its yearly "Mass Attacks in Public Spaces" report, most recently issued in 2020, the NTAC found that most of the attackers used firearms, nearly half of which were possessed illegally during the attack. The report also found many attackers had experienced unemployment, substance abuse, mental health issues or recent stressful events. Attackers also had a history of prior criminal charges or arrests and domestic violence. Additionally, the report found that most of the attackers had exhibited behavior that raised concerns other individuals, causing many of those people to fear for their own safety or that of others.

The Secret Service recommends a multidisciplinary approach to violence prevention, called behavioral threat assessment. The goal is to proactively identify individuals who display threatening behavior and intervene prior to violence occurring, which requires a community-based approach. According to the NTAC, faith-based leaders, mental health professionals, workplace managers, law enforcement officers and school personnel play essential roles in threat assessment.

The trainings are part of Attorney General Raoul's work to address violence throughout Illinois. In addition to working with local law enforcement agencies and prosecutors to increase awareness of Illinois' red flag law, Raoul has worked with other law enforcement agencies to address gaps in the state's FOID card

system. The Attorney General's office supported a law that was signed in 2021 to expand background checks and require the Illinois State Police (ISP) to confiscate firearms from individuals whose FOID cards have been revoked. Raoul's office also prosecutes individuals who lie on FOID card applications, collaborates with local law enforcement to combat gun trafficking and uses the office's jurisdiction to prosecute multi-county gun trafficking offenses.

The Attorney General's office created a state-of-the-art crime-gun tracing database, Crime Gun Connect. The database is housed at the ISP and serves as an investigative tool accessible only by Illinois law enforcement officials and collects data related to crime gun tracing performed in the state of Illinois since 2009. The Attorney General's office filled in the gap and has conducted law enforcement trainings to increase awareness and usage of the new database. Nationally, Attorney General Raoul successfully filed and resolved a lawsuit to get the federal firearm license of an unscrupulous arms manufacturer revoked.

In addition to supporting law enforcement, the Attorney General's office supports victims' service providers around Illinois that support trauma-informed services for crime victims and their families. Raoul's Crime Victims Services Division administers a host of programs and services to assist survivors of violent crime. For instance, the Illinois Crime Victims Compensation program offers reimbursement for expenses incurred by eligible victims as a result of a violent crime. More information is available on the [Attorney General's website](#).