Microsoft NISOS SOCIALSCOUT

JOINT THREAT INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Learning from Bomb Threat Hoaxes Targeting Recent US Elections

A collaborative analysis of past (2024-2025) and emerging election bomb threat activity, prepared for election officials and law enforcement.

DATE
15 September 2026

About this Task Force

We are the Bomb Threats Task Force (BTTF)—a working group of three organizations that came together in 2026 to examine bomb threat hoaxes in the 2024 and 2025 elections to help election officials and law enforcement prepare for what could come next.

- **SocialScout**: an election-security team that tracks threats, harassment, and influence operations targeting US elections.
- **Nisos**: a human risk intelligence company that uses open-source intelligence to attribute online threats to the people behind them.
- **Microsoft**: protects customers around the world from cyber threats. Through its Tech for Society initiative and the Microsoft Digital Crimes Unit, Microsoft brings threat intelligence, investigative expertise, and election security experience to help mitigate election security issues, including bomb hoaxes.

No single organization has the full picture. Election officials see the inbox, law enforcement responds to 911 calls, and researchers see the sender infrastructure. This report pulls those views together in one place.

The report is the beginning of our work to support those who will make decisions in the moment a threat comes in—elections officials, local law enforcement, and the partners who support them.

About this Research

The research relies on publicly available news reporting, open-source intelligence, and third-party investigative tools. We refer to the threats as bomb threat hoaxes throughout the report; we do not focus on real or credible bomb threats but rather the hoaxes designed to create confusion and chaos. All the bomb threat hoaxes we evaluated were sent via email, not phone. We continue to receive new information regarding bomb threat hoaxes; each new piece of evidence improves our understanding and analysis. For more information on our underlying sources and approach, please see Appendix A: Methodology and Tradecraft.

We left active news URLs live so readers can follow the reporting. Other links—particularly to sender infrastructure or hostile domains—are defanged, a security-industry convention that wraps the period in brackets (e.g. cyberfear[.]com) so the link cannot be clicked or visited by accident.

Learning from Bomb Threat Hoaxes Targeting US Elections

Executive Summary

At least two separate threat actors—designated here as Muted Umber and Sudden Vermillion by SocialScout and Nisos—likely conducted waves of bomb threat hoaxes to disrupt US election infrastructure and voting across nine states in 2024 and again in New Jersey in 2025. The threat of similar foreign or domestic actors leveraging anonymous infrastructure to coordinate simultaneous, widespread bomb threats for disruption very likely will persist in the 2026 midterms. While we do not assess that artificial intelligence (AI) played a significant role in the 2024 and 2025 hoaxes, the technology could enable rapid message generation and sending at scale in future elections.

- Actors sent approximately 250 likely bomb threat hoaxes across two waves in 2024 and at least 30 more threats in 2025.
    - On Election Day, Tuesday, 5 November 2024, polling locations in Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Arizona received more than 124 threats, which forced evacuations and, in some jurisdictions, court orders to extend voting hours.
    - A second wave occurred during ballot counting on Friday, 8 November 2024 and targeted California, Maryland, Minnesota, and Oregon with at least 126 threats.
    - In 2025, seven New Jersey counties received at least 30 threats.
- Both actors used single-purpose accounts on privacy-focused or foreign email infrastructure to limit attribution. Muted Umber routed threats through Mailum/CyberFear, adopted American-sounding and ideological handles, and targeted election offices to disrupt voting and vote counting. Sudden Vermillion routed threats through Mail[.]ru, often using foreign-sounding names to target polling locations—churches, schools, and community centers—on Election Day.
- In the last two years, similar waves of bomb threat hoaxes have targeted zoos and aquariums, airports, LGBTQ+ events, state capitols, and schools, but we have not directly connected these to the election-related campaigns.
- Actors very likely will continue relying on privacy-focused or foreign email infrastructure, and incorporate AI to evolve their tradecraft. Copycats perceiving the 2024 and 2025 disruptions as successful may amplify volume and make it harder to distinguish coordinated bomb threat hoaxes from real threats.

Recommendations

Given the potential impact bomb threat hoaxes can have on our election processes and resources, we offer four recommendations for both election officials and law enforcement to help reduce the impact of these hoax campaigns.

- **Share Threats with the Task Force:** If you receive a threat, we encourage you to share it with the task force via email at report@socialscout.llc. Our team is here to support election officials and law enforcement nationwide. More information better enables us to track the TTPs threat actors are using and push out relevant guidance to the community.
- **Expect a Threat and Plan Accordingly:** Plan before Election Day, make staff and key partners aware of the plan, and identify available resources to respond. Make sure your response plan includes an effective messaging strategy to ensure election workers feel safe doing their jobs, voters know where they can go to vote in case of disruptions, and the media has accurate information to share with the public. Threats may arrive at the hyper-local or polling place level—ensure that any plan includes communication with these election workers and facility owners.
- **Share with Authorities and Partners:** If your jurisdiction receives a threat, share quickly and widely with law enforcement, neighboring jurisdictions, and partners.
- **Educate Your Team and Your Partners:** Organizations have developed numerous resources, including this report, to help election officials and law enforcement best prepare for election threats. Whether your jurisdiction has experienced numerous similar threats or not, the resources we link below can help you learn more about the problem and plan to mitigate it.
    - Bomb Threats in Election Settings: Guidance for Law Enforcement (Committee for Safe and Secure Elections)
    - Preparation Kept Bomb Threats from Disrupting 2024 Election (The Brennan Center for Justice)
    - Managing Election Site Evacuations (Election Security Exchange)

Introduction: A New Challenge

The 2024 presidential election saw an unprecedented wave of bomb threat hoaxes targeting polling locations and state and local election offices across the country. Never before had election officials faced large waves of emails falsely claiming people had placed explosive devices in hundreds of buildings where voters were casting ballots or election workers were counting votes. Even though law enforcement ultimately deemed the threats were not real, they prompted polling location closures on Election Day and disrupted vote counting operations on the Friday after the election. The threats created immediate security challenges for local election officials and law enforcement who had to triage and respond to the threats, often disrupting the election process, and risking public confidence in the outcome of the election.

Immediately after the election, we started collecting data on these bomb threat hoaxes, talking to election officials across the country, and working to understand what happened. This report is a reflection of our understanding of what occurred in November 2024 and again in New Jersey in November 2025 and the actors involved. We also go beyond elections to begin to analyze where we have seen threat actors use similar bomb threat hoaxes to create confusion against other targets.[1] The experience in 2024 and 2025 offers useful lessons learned to help election officials and law enforcement prepare for future disruptions and we offer recommendations on ways to report and respond to potential bomb threat hoaxes in future election cycles. Our goal is to help election officials and law enforcement best prepare their jurisdictions to minimize the impact should bomb threat hoaxes reemerge in the 2026 midterms and 2028 presidential elections.

Bomb Threat Hoaxes During the 2024 Election

The bomb threat hoax emails started almost as soon as polls opened on Election Day, Tuesday, 5 November 2024. By the end of that week, nine states had received more than 250 threats targeting polling locations and election offices.[2] We categorized the more than 250 fake bomb threats into two distinct waves: the first wave of threats occurred only on Election Day while the second wave occurred the Friday after elections while ballot counting occurred. Authorities across the country ultimately deemed all the bomb threats to be non-credible and did not find any explosive devices in connection to any of the emails. While we have limited insight into the actors' motivations, the threats appear to have been designed to cause chaos and disrupt election processes, which partially succeeded in some jurisdictions. However, their ultimate goal(s) remain unclear.

[1]We continue to receive new information regarding bomb threat hoaxes; each new piece of evidence improves our understanding and improves our analysis. For more information on our underlying sources and approach, please see *Appendix A: Methodology and Tradecraft*.

[2]https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/bcj-2024-election-bomb-threat-tracker_0.pdf

Election Day Threats

The first wave of more than 124 email threats occurred on Election Day and targeted five swing states:

- **Georgia** was one of the first states to receive the emails on election day and ultimately experienced at least 60 bomb threat hoaxes primarily targeting the Atlanta metropolitan area. Responses to the threats varied: some polling locations briefly evacuated and others temporarily closed and extended their voting hours.[3] [4] [5] [6]

- In **Michigan**, the Secretary of State's office received a bomb threat hoax at approximately 9:30am local time.[7] Additionally, an unspecified number of polling locations in at least four counties also received hoax threats.[8] [9]

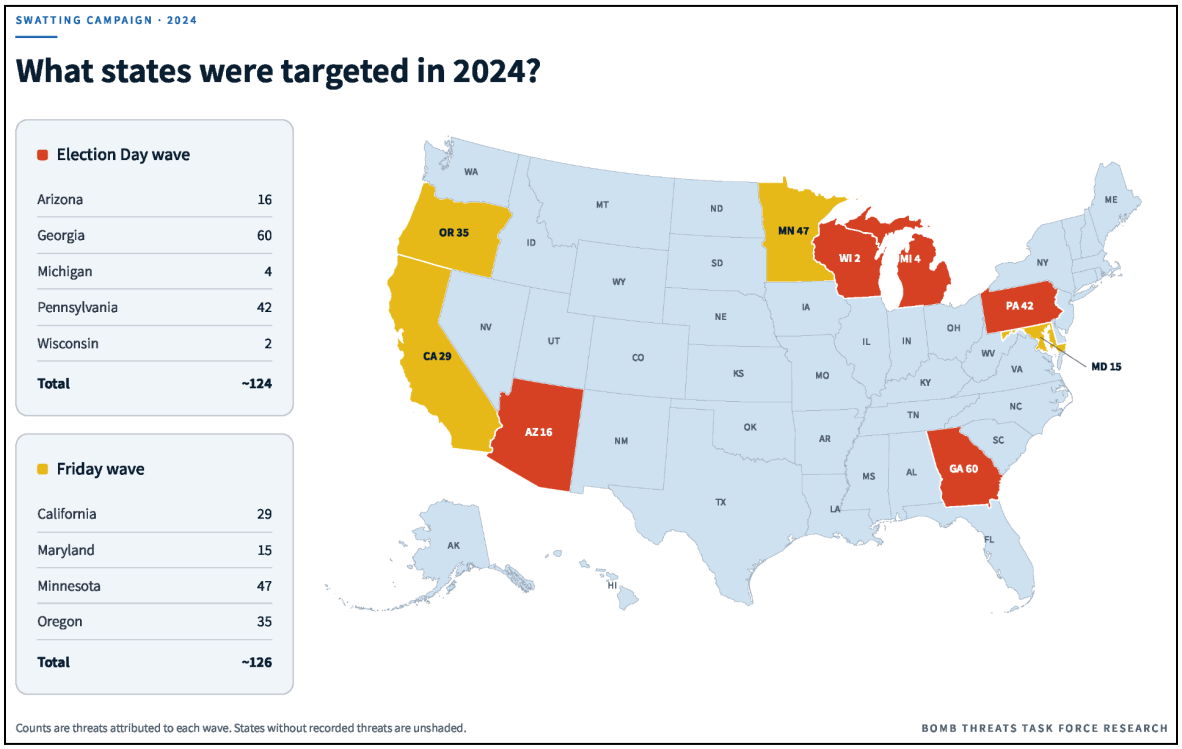
- At least 32 counties in **Pennsylvania** received bomb threat hoaxes that targeted polling places or elections offices. At least ten polling locations in Philadelphia received bomb threat hoaxes in the evening.[10] [11] [12]

- In **Wisconsin**, at least two polling locations in Madison received bomb threats, but the threats did not disrupt voting.[13]

- At least 10 of **Arizona's** 15 counties received bomb threat hoaxes. Several targeted polling locations in Navajo County and others targeted polling locations and county election offices across the state. Election officials in Arizona received the threats in the late afternoon and early

[3] https://www.11alive.com/article/news/politics/elections/brad-raffensperger-georgia-election-update/85-81b805e3-11ea-423b-8263-038d57f0ee37
[4] https://www.macon.com/news/politics-government/election/article295103679.html
[5] https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2024/11/05/georgia-election-bomb-threats/76082394007/
[6] https://www.cnn.com/2024/11/05/us/georgia-non-credible-bomb-threat-russia/index.html
[7] Michigan State Police - Open Records Request #31333735
[8] https://www.thecentersquare.com/michigan/article_9cd9aa0c-9c6d-11ef-aa8f-4f0e4d344531.html
[9] https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/05/us/politics/pollls-voting-bomb-threats.html
[10] https://www.goerie.com/story/news/politics/elections/state/2024/11/07/pa-bomb-threats-election-day/7610963000 7
[11] https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/05/us/politics/pollls-voting-bomb-threats.html
[12] https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/polling-place-in-west-chester-pa-evacuated-due-to-bomb-threat-official-says/4020027/
[13] https://www.reuters.com/world/us/fake-bomb-threats-linked-russia-briefly-close-georgia-polling-locations-2024-11-05/

evening, well after some of the other states on the East Coast, which likely gave them some advantage of early warning from their East Coast counterparts.[14] [15] [16] [17] (see Graphics 3 and 4)



Graphic 1: Map showing the states that received bomb threat hoaxes on Election Day 2024 and the Friday following.

Election Day Responses Varied

Responses to these false threats varied across states and local jurisdictions for multiple reasons. Some of the counties that received the first threats had no way of knowing they were not the only one who had received these hoaxes. Other jurisdictions that received them later in the day, or on Friday, had the advantage of early warning and information sharing from counterparts who had already received them. Additionally, some bomb threats went straight to election officials, who were able to assess and decide on the response. In other cases, churches, schools, and community centers received the threats directly and notified law enforcement to coordinate a response without informing election officials.

[14] https://www.votebeat.org/arizona/2024/11/06/election-day-navajo-nation-extended-hours-bomb-threats/
[15] https://azmirror.com/2024/11/20/election-day-bomb-threats-sent-to-maricopa-pima-counties-were-identical/
[16] https://azmirror.com/2024/11/12/ten-arizona-counties-were-targeted-by-russian-hoax-bomb-threats-on-election-day/
[17] https://azmirror.com/2024/11/05/hoax-russian-bomb-threats-target-four-az-polling-sites-officials-say/

Threats Persisted on Friday Following the Election

Three days after the election on Friday, 8 November 2024 actors sent more bomb threat hoaxes in the second wave to mostly election offices, many of which were still counting votes or conducting post-election processes.[18]

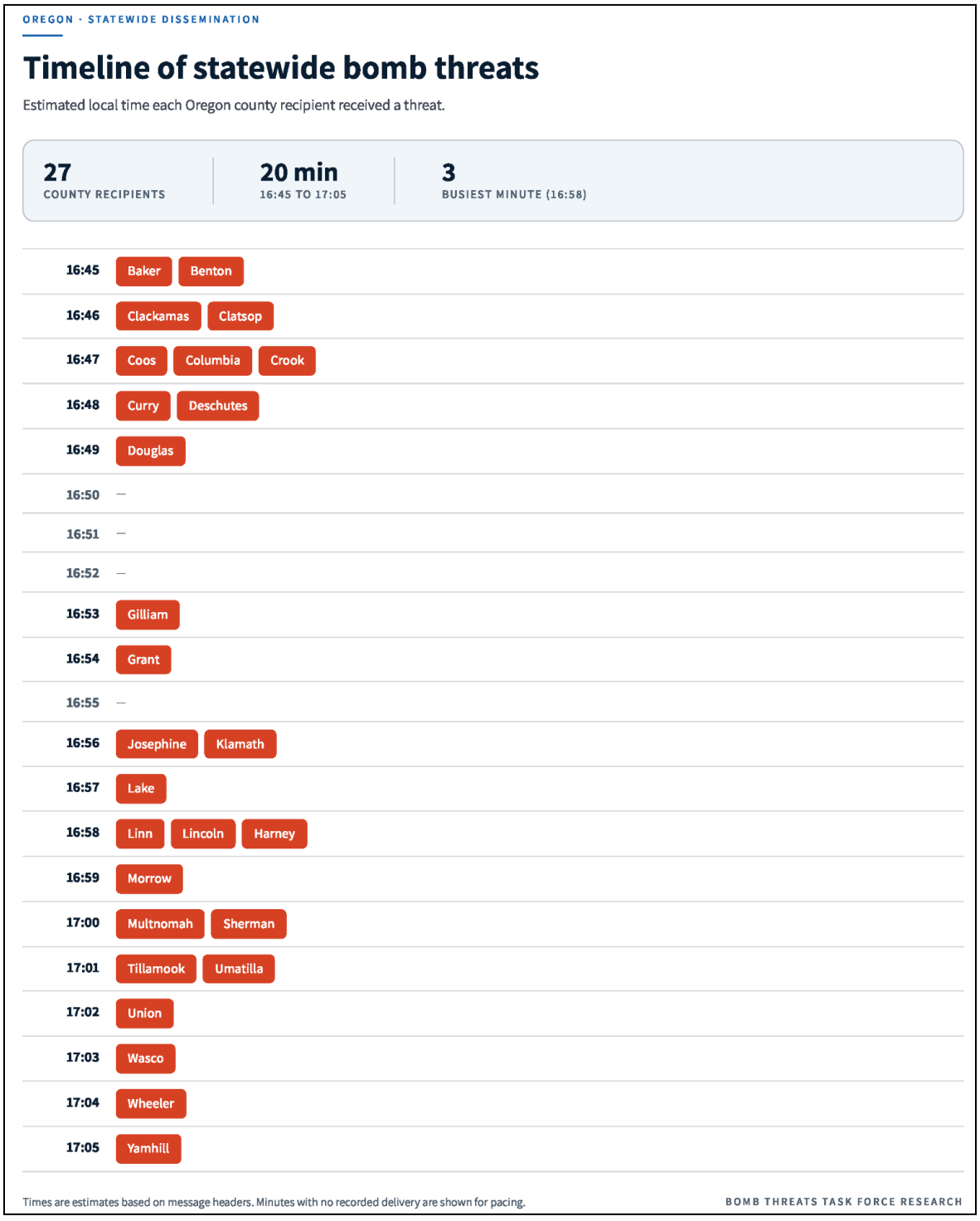
- **California** received approximately 29 bomb threat hoaxes. Some of the most populous counties in the country (Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Santa Clara, etc.) received bomb threats at election offices where ballot counting was ongoing, some of which law enforcement temporarily evacuated while they investigated.[19] [20] [21] [22] [23]
- In **Maryland**, at least 15 local election boards received hoax bomb threat emails late in the day while many boards were concluding their work.[24] [25]
- In **Minnesota**, approximately 47 of the state's 87 counties received bomb threats. Some counties chose to evacuate and call the bomb squad.[26]
- All of **Oregon's** 36 counties reportedly received bomb threats.[27] [28] [29]

Timestamps Suggest Systematic Approach

The timestamps for the Oregon bomb threats show how one of the threat actor(s) operated. The first Oregon counties (Baker and Benton) received the threats at about 4:45pm local time on Friday. Over the next approximately 20 minutes, nearly every county in the state received a similar email. The actor(s) sent subsequent emails to the counties in alphabetical order and included the address of the

[18]https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/bcj-2024-election-bomb-threat-tracker_0.pdf?inline=1
[19]https://capitolweekly.net/from-hope-to-the-secretary-of-states-office-dr-shirley-weber/ (minute 2:29)
[20]https://www.countynewscenter.com/bomb-threat-at-registrar-of-voters-investigated-is-not-credible/
[21]https://abc7news.com/post/santa-clara-county-registrar-voters-office-evacuated-after-bomb-threat-authorities-say/15534488/
[22]https://abc7.com/post/election-office-ballot-processing-center-los-angeles-county-receives-latest-series-bomb-threats/15532139/
[23]https://kmph.com/news/local/bomb-threat-at-kings-county-elections-department-ruled-non-credible
[24]https://marylandmatters.org/2024/11/11/ballot-counting-continues-despite-threats-to-14-local-election-boards-in-maryland/
[25]https://www.yahoo.com/news/15-maryland-board-election-sites-204102872.html
[26]https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/election-bomb-threats-minnesota-similar-threats-nationwide/
[27]https://ktvz.com/news/crime-courts/2024/11/15/fbi-investigating-bomb-threats-emailed-to-c-oregon-election-offices-others-around-state-says-none-credible-thus-far/
[28]https://elkhornmediagroup.com/grant-county-clerks-office-among-others-receives-bomb-threat/
[29]https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/bcj-2024-election-bomb-threat-tracker_0.pdf?inline=1

county office. The last two counties by alphabetical order, Wheeler and Yamhill, received their threats at approximately 5:04pm and 5:05pm respectively.



Graphic 2: Timeline representation of the bomb threat hoaxes Oregon counties received.

Two Separate Threat Actors Likely Conducted the Hoaxes

At least two separate threat actors—designated here as Muted Umber and Sudden Vermillion by SocialScout and Nisos—likely conducted the waves of bomb threat hoaxes to cause chaos and disrupt US election infrastructure and voting across nine states in 2024 and again in New Jersey in 2025. Both actors showed operational security by minimizing the digital footprint associated with the email addresses they used. Specifically, both used single-purpose accounts on privacy-focused email infrastructure to limit attribution and maintain operational security. We did not find other data linking the bomb threat emails to the threat actor(s') real-world identities, suggesting they likely did not use the accounts regularly and established them to engage in anonymous activity. The two groups also employed a number of different tactics and techniques across platforms, used distinct sender profiles, and threatened different targets. They also had variations in the language and timing of the bomb threat hoaxes. See the table below for a side-by-side comparison across multiple different tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs).[30]

TTP	Muted Umber	Sudden Vermillion
Email Service Provider	Mailum/CyberFear	Mail.ru
Sender Profile	Appear as US-based; used ideological and slogan-based names like "MAGA Sam" and "MAGA Alex"; included extremist numerology like 1488 and 888 in their email handles	Appear as foreign-based; sometimes using names that were foreign-sounding
Primary Targets	Election offices	Polling locations, including churches, schools, and community centers
Recipients	Election office public email addresses	Email addresses the actor assessed were associated with the schools, churches, recreation centers serving as polling locations
Threat Language	Measured language; meant to cause confusion	Urgent and emotional language to cause immediate evacuation of polling locations
Timing	Election Day and the following Friday	Election Day only

Muted Umber

Platform

Muted Umber likely used Mailum/CyberFear because the company emphasizes security and encryption services. Mailum/CyberFear advertises its mission, "to make emails private again," and its

[30]As we only have a partial sample of the original bomb threat hoaxes, we cannot definitively confirm that all received follow these patterns. Receiving and analyzing more bomb threat hoaxes will enable us to revisit and revise these assessments as warranted.

website claims “no one but you can access your data.” [31] CyberFear and Mailum almost certainly operate as a single privacy-focused email platform that markets encrypted messaging services. Users can register for an email on Mailum and can choose between a @cyberfear[.]com or a @mailum[.]com domain.[32] [33] A review of domain name system records and information from the Mailum website source code indicates that Mailum and CyberFear share network infrastructure.

Age and Continuity of the Email Service Provider

Mailum/CyberFear has operated for approximately seven years: operators created the cyberfear-com GitHub organization in October 2019 and activated the CoinPayments merchant account (later rebranded “Mailum”) in March 2020; however, this user account is no longer active.[34] [35] [36] The same operators previously ran SCRYPTmail (November 2014) and a TimeGap prototype (2013), extending the encrypted-email lineage to roughly 13 years.

Business Model and Customer Scale

Both brands market themselves as privacy email options like ProtonMail or Tutanota that offer end-to-end encryption and “spy-proof” service on a paid subscription. In a 2020 BlackHatWorld Forum post, a now defunct account appearing to belong to CyberFear advertised a mass-send capability of up to 50 recipients.[37] [38]

Mailum/CyberFear’s prior public CoinPayments merchant ledger recorded at least 2,228 verified paid transactions since March 2020, corresponding to an unknown number of unique users. This figure only captures one of the platform’s payment channels. Mailum/CyberFear also accepts payment through Stripe and Paypal, neither of which exposes public transaction counts.

Documented Ransomware Use

Multiple threat intelligence vendors and national Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERT) have independently documented @cyberfear[.]com and @mailum[.]com addresses as extortion-communication channels for named ransomware families (see table below). The consistent, multi-year selection of Mailum/CyberFear across unrelated ransomware operations indicates that the criminal-services ecosystem widely recognizes the platform as a jurisdictionally difficult and identity-protective channel—not simply a mainstream privacy-email alternative.

[31] https://mailum[.]com
[32] https://cyberfear[.]com
[33] https://mailum[.]com
[34] https://api.github[.]com/orgs/cyberfear-com
[35] https://github[.]com/cyberfear-com
[36] https://www.coinpayments[.]net/feedback-5f45af3e16a28a399b1ff2c7da393c9a
[37] https://www.blackhatworld[.]com/seo/permanently-closed-marketplace-sales-thread.1269500/page-2
[38] https://azmirror.com/2024/11/20/election-day-bomb-threats-sent-to-maricopa-pima-counties-were-identical

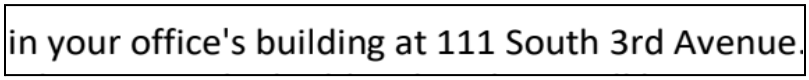
Family	Activity	Sources
Brain Cipher	Attacked Indonesia's national data center on 20 June 2024, disrupting 210 government services; demanded$8 million, later released a free decryptor.[39]	Group-IB[40] SentinelOne[41] WatchGuard[42]
Makop/Mimic/N3ww4v3	Ransom notes and encrypted-file extensions carry datastore@cyberfear.com; active since 2020.	CERT-in[43] BleepingComputer[44]
Worry (Phobos family)	Ransom notes direct victims to email d0ntw0rry@cyberfear.com for decryption instructions; active since December 2022.	PCRisk[45]

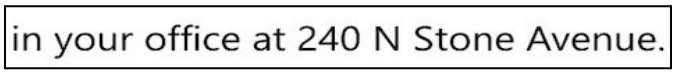
Sender Profile

Muted Umber likely wanted the bomb threat emails to seem as though they were sent by someone from the United States and adopted American-sounding ideological handles like maga_alex@cyberfear[.]com and maga_sam@mailum[.]com that each sent only one or two threats. The sender(s) used these email addresses to send bomb threat hoaxes on Election Day and then again that Friday. The sender(s) probably used more than one email address because multiple unique senders can make it more difficult for election officials and law enforcement to evaluate the threats and connect the dots in real time. Additionally, some of the email handles had common first-and-last name combinations with sequential numbers and included extremist numerology like 1488 and 888, which are well-known white supremacist and neo-Nazi markers.

Targets and Threat Language

Muted Umber targeted election offices likely to disrupt election and administration and vote counting. Muted Umber sent the threats directly to election office email accounts, which are publicly available on state and local websites. Muted Umber used similar language in all bomb threats targeting election offices in 2024 we collected. The text of these threats was largely similar except the sender changed the address of the location for each target.





Graphics 3 and 4: Snippets from bomb threat hoaxes the Arizona election offices received.

[39]https://www.komdigi.go.id/berita/siaran-pers/detail/siaran-pers-no-412-hm-kominfo-06-2024-tentang-indikasi-serangan-siber-wamenkominfo-fokus-tangani-dampak-layanan-pemerintah
[40]https://www.group-ib.com/blog/brain-cipher-ransomware
[41]https://www.sentinelone.com/anthology/brain-cipher/#cq=i1
[42]https://www.watchguard.com/wgrd-security-hub/ransomware-tracker/brain-cipher
[43]https://www.csk.gov.in/alerts/Makop_Ransomware.html
[44]https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/forums/t/809810/ransomware-datastorecyberfearcom
[45]https://www.pcrisk.com/removal-guides/25608-worry-ransomware

Similar Language in Bomb Threat Hoaxes Sent to Other Targets
The language used in all of the Muted Umber threats that targeted the US election closely match the language and tone of bomb threat hoax ransom emails targeting 40 schools in India in December 2024, a month after the election. The nearly identical threat language suggests either that multiple actor(s) relied on a form email or that it was the same actor conducting multiple campaigns.

- **Election Threat Language Example:** *"Hello, I've planted a bomb (lead azide) in your office at 240 N Stone Avenue. It is small and hidden very well. It will not cause much damage to the building but there will be many wounded people when it explodes. I plan on remotely detonating the device as soon as there is a large police presence."*
- **Delhi, India, School Threat Example (December 2024)**: *"I planted multiple bombs (lead azide, explosive compound used in detonators) inside the building. The bombs are small and hidden very well. It will not cause very much damage to the building, but many people will be injured when the bombs detonate. You all deserve to suffer and lose limbs. If I do not receive USD 30,000, I will detonate the bombs."*[46]

Sudden Vermillion

Platform

Sudden Vermillion sent bomb threats using Russian email server mail[.]ru. Threat actors and scammers often leverage the Russia-based service because it allows users to create multiple accounts from a single IP address and operates outside US jurisdiction, limiting the effectiveness of US subpoenas and legal requests.

- Mail[.]ru operates under a Russian technology company (VKontakte) and ranks among the most popular email providers in Russia; it is approximately the 33rd most visited website globally.[47] Mail[.]ru—along with other Russian email providers—requires users to provide a valid phone number during account registration, though users routinely bypass this requirement by using disposable Russian SIM cards. The site also permits bulk-account creation.

Sender Profile

Sudden Vermillion likely wanted the bomb threats to appear as though they were sent by an individual overseas. For example, one of the email addresses used to send threats used an ethnically foreign-sounding username, "iryna.melin.06@mail[.]ru," to send bomb threats to multiple polling places in Philadelphia. Of note, the same or similar usernames sent bomb threat hoaxes to US zoos and

[46]https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/you-all-deserve-to-suffer-and-lose-limbs-bomb-threat-letter-to-over-40-delhi-schools-demands-30000/articleshow/116123854.cms
[47]https://www.similarweb.com/top-websites/trending

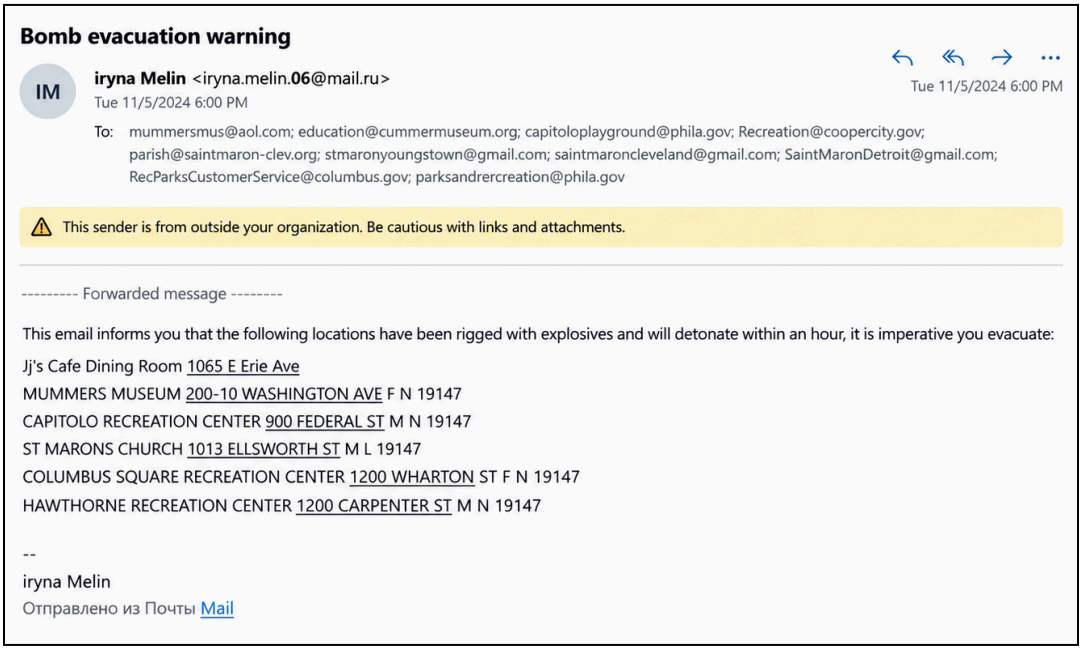
aquariums, LGBTQ+ events, and airports, suggesting it is possible Sudden Vermillion was behind multiple campaigns in 2024 (see Similar Threat Actor Hoaxes section).

Targets and Threat Language

Sudden Vermillion primarily targeted polling locations on Election Day, very likely to disrupt voting. Sometimes Sudden Vermillion sent them to incorrect email addresses for locations in other states not connected to the polling location. Election officials were often the last to know about these threats because the threat actors sent them to email addresses associated with the polling locations, such as churches, schools, and community centers. Recipients at these locations worked directly with 911 call centers and law enforcement to respond.

For example, bomb threat hoaxes targeting Philadelphia on Election Day referenced six polling locations in the city. The sender of the emails likely copied and pasted the list from a roster of all polling locations in Philadelphia that appeared online:

- Jj's Cafe Dining Room (1065 E Erie Ave)
- Mummers Museum (200-10 Washington Ave)
- Capitolo Recreation Center (900 Federal Street)
- St Maron's Church (1013 Ellsworth St)
- Columbus Square Recreation Center (1200 Wharton St)
- Hawthorne Recreation Center (1200 Carpenter St)



Bomb evacuation warning

IM **iryna Melin** <iryna.melin.06@mail.ru>
Tue 11/5/2024 6:00 PM

Tue 11/5/2024 6:00 PM

To: mummersmus@aol.com; education@cummermuseum.org; capitoloplayground@phila.gov; Recreation@coopercity.gov; parish@saintmaron-clev.org; stmaronyoungstown@gmail.com; saintmaroncleveland@gmail.com; SaintMaronDetroit@gmail.com; RecParksCustomerService@columbus.gov; parksandrercreation@phila.gov

⚠ This sender is from outside your organization. Be cautious with links and attachments.

--------- Forwarded message --------

This email informs you that the following locations have been rigged with explosives and will detonate within an hour, it is imperative you evacuate:

Jj's Cafe Dining Room 1065 E Erie Ave
MUMMERS MUSEUM 200-10 WASHINGTON AVE F N 19147
CAPITOLO RECREATION CENTER 900 FEDERAL ST M N 19147
ST MARONS CHURCH 1013 ELLSWORTH ST M L 19147
COLUMBUS SQUARE RECREATION CENTER 1200 WHARTON ST F N 19147
HAWTHORNE RECREATION CENTER 1200 CARPENTER ST M N 19147

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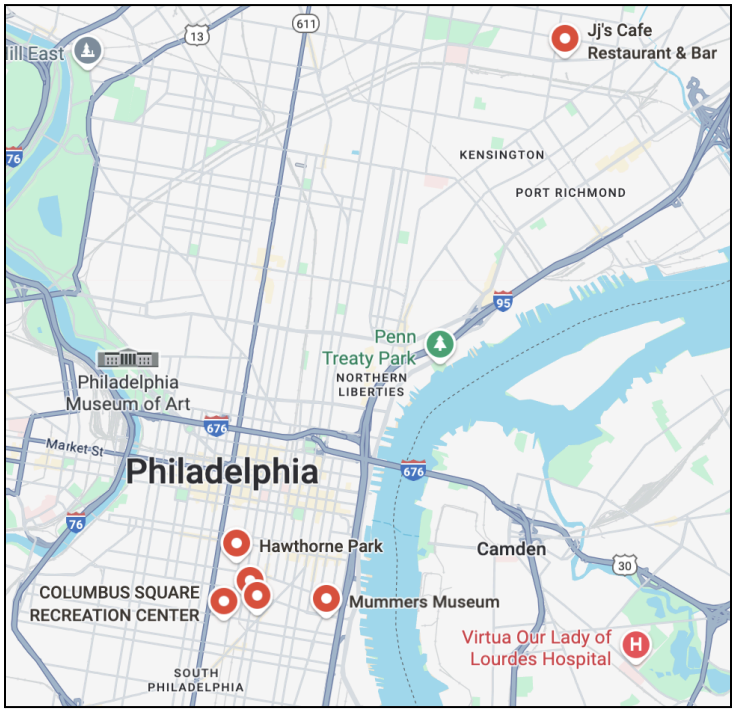
iryna Melin
Отправлено из Почты Mail

Graphic 5: A bomb threat hoax email a polling place in Philadelphia received on Election Day tied to specific polling locations in the area. This is an AI-generated recreation of original threat email for clarity and readability. Original email screenshot available here.[48]

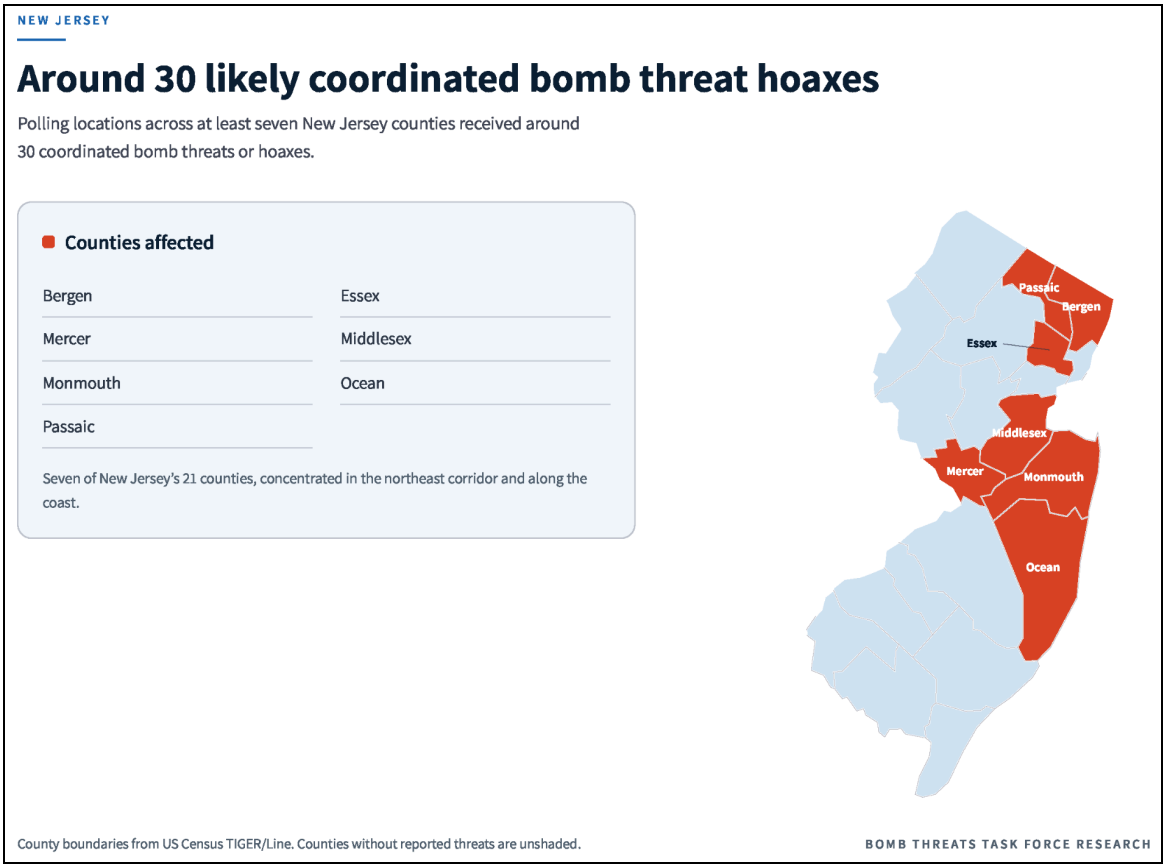


Graphic 6: Map showing locations of six polling places in Philadelphia that received bomb threat hoaxes.

Bomb Threat Hoaxes Resurfaced in 2025

Several states held major statewide and local elections in 2025 and we again saw evidence of a likely coordinated campaign similar to 2024, suggesting the issue will persist in future election cycles. In New Jersey on Election Day, approximately 30 polling locations in at least seven counties across the state (Bergen, Essex, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, and Passaic) received likely coordinated bomb threat hoaxes. Some polling places closed briefly for investigation and later reopened, while officials at other polling locations sent voters to other locations nearby.[49] [50] Additionally, multiple polling locations in New York City also received threats that officials described as "swatting" during the high-profile mayoral election, but authorities have not confirmed they are connected to the threats in New Jersey.[51] [52]

[48]https://www.pacourts.us/Storage/media/pdfs/20241107/153927-nov.5%2C2024-order.pdf
[49]https://www.nbcnewyork.com/new-jersey/nj-polling-location-bomb-threats-passaic-bergen-monmouth-counties/6413781
[50]https://www.nj.com/politics/2025/11/bomb-threats-targeting-nj-gubernatorial-election-echo-threats-made-in-last-presidential-election.html
[51]https://pix11.com/news/politics/new-york-elections/bomb-threats-made-against-multiple-nyc-voting-locations
[52]https://abcnews.com/US/credible-bomb-threats-temporarily-halt-voting-northern-new/story?id=127168655



Graphic 7: Map of counties that received bomb threat hoaxes in New Jersey in 2025.

Bomb Threat Hoax Campaigns Target More Than Elections

We identified additional bomb threat hoax campaigns against other facilities and events in recent years, some of which shared similar characteristics with the campaigns we saw targeting elections in 2024 and 2025. We highlight several select examples in the table below to provide election officials with a broader understanding of the threat. The selected campaigns demonstrate the broad range of locations and targets that have experienced large scale bomb threat hoaxes.

- The email address melin.vika@mail[.]ru sent bomb threats to airports and aircraft in the Cayman Islands, Bermuda, Tortola, and Anguilla in May 2024.[53] [54] A slight variation of this email address (vika.melin.05@mail[.]ru) was identified as sending hoax bomb threats in the 2024 US presidential election.

- Law enforcement announcements in June 2024 indicated an email address with the username @iryna.melin.06 sent multiple bomb threats across the United States, including against a Pride

[53]https://caymanmarlroad.com/2024/05/06/bomb-threats-across-airports-in-british-overseas-territories
[54]https://caymanmarlroad.com/2024/05/06/police-warn-of-malicious-bomb-hoax-email

event in Grand Marais, Minnesota.[55] Additionally, a June 2024 bomb threat from "iryna Melin" sent from mail[.]ru infrastructure targeted an Austin, Texas LGBTQ+ event.[56]

- The hoax emails contained similar language used on 4 January 2024 targeting locations in Massachusetts, which Terrorizers111, an anonymous threat actor, self-claimed.[57]
- A wave of hoax emailed bomb threats targeted New York Environment Offices two days before the 2024 presidential election.

Target and Dates	Number of Threats	Delivery	Locations	Impact
US Zoos and Aquariums; March-July 2026	At least 33	Email, phone	Arizona,[58] Arkansas,[59] California,[60] Colorado,[61] Connecticut,[62] Florida,[63] Georgia,[64] Idaho,[65] Kentucky,[66] Minnesota,[67] New York,[68] Ohio,[69] Tennessee,[70] Texas,[71] Washington.[72]	Evacuated some facilities briefly for security sweeps or closed entirely. Some also implemented upgraded security and screening.

[55]https://cookcountymn.gov/news_detail_T6_R470.php
[56]https://austinfreepress.org/queens-gambit-performers-vow-to-return-after-bomb-threat-shutters-drag-queen-show
[57]https://nantucketcurrent.com/news/bomb-threat-evacuates-nantucket-town-county-building
[58]https://www.azfamily.com/2026/05/02/phoenix-zoo-reopens-after-reported-bomb-threat/
[59]https://www.littlerockzoo.com/zoo-blog/blog-posts/2026/06/little-rock-zoo-resolves-hoax-threat/
[60]https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/fake-threat-san-jose-happy-hollow-zoo/4089042/
[61]https://www.9news.com/article/life/style/colorado-guide/denver-zoo-reopen-threats-targeting-us-zoos/73-b34b4534-611a-4dca-bc3f-3dbfc83eea35
[62]https://www.wtnh.com/news/connecticut/fairfield/beardsley-zoo-closed-for-the-day-due-to-bomb-threat/;https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article315089403.html;https://www.nytimes.com/2026/06/24/us/zoos-aquariums-swatting.html
[63]https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article315089403.html;https://www.wesh.com/article/central-florida-zoo-evacuated-after-bomb-threat/71516884;https://www.clickorlando.com/news/local/2026/06/09/gatorland-evacuates-over-reported-bomb-threat-news-6-discovers/
[64]https://www.atlantanewsfirst.com/2026/05/16/zoo-atlanta-evacuated-due-bomb-threat-police-say/
[65]https://pocatello.gov/m/newsflash/Home/Detail/2523
[66]https://www.wdrb.com/news/louisville-zoo-bomb-threat-part-of-national-swatting-hoax/article_ed178a3b-64f5-4f12-81aa-3012d9a16589.html
[67]https://kstp.com/kstp-news/top-news/como-park-zoo-evacuated-due-to-bomb-threat/
[68]https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/buffalo/news/2026/07/07/buffalo-zoo-resumes-normal-activities-after--swatting--bomb-threat
[69]https://www.cleveland19.com/2026/05/01/guests-evacuated-toledo-zoo-over-bomb-threat-police-say
[70]https://www.actionnews5.com/2026/04/04/memphis-zoo-evacuated-due-bomb-threat
[71]https://kfoxtv.com/news/local/el-paso-zoo-evacuation
[72]https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/woodland-park-zoo-evacuated-bomb-threat/281-cfc14d01-b798-4d94-8049-4e5b0a61d10d

Target and Dates	Number of Threats	Delivery	Locations	Impact
Caribbean Airports and Aircraft; April-May 2024	At least 5	Email (Mail.ru)	Anguilla,[73] Bermuda,[74] the British Virgin Islands,[75] Cayman Islands,[76] Turks and Caicos.[77]	Evacuated some airports and closed others temporarily for security sweeps.
US-Based LGBTQ+ Events; March-June 2024	At least 10	Email, phone	Alaska,[78] Massachusetts,[79] Minnesota,[80] New Jersey,[81] North Carolina,[82] Pennsylvania,[83] Texas,[84] Virginia.[85]	Some organizations canceled the events, others did a brief security sweep and resumed their programming.
State Capitol Buildings; 3 January 2024	At least 21	Email	Alabama,[86] Alaska,[87] Arizona,[88] Connecticut,[89] Georgia,[90] Hawaii,[91]	Several buildings went on lockdown while authorities conducted searches, others remained closed out of an

[73]https://caymanmarlroad.com/2024/05/06/bomb-threats-across-airports-in-british-overseas-territories/
[74]https://www.royalgazette.com/crime/news/article/20240506/roads-closed-and-travellers-taken-off-flight-in-emergency/
[75]https://www.vinews.org/posts/airport-bomb-threat-sent-to-vino-who-alerted-cop-national-security-council-tb-lettsome-international-airport-was-temporarily-closed
[76]https://caymanmarlroad.com/2024/05/06/police-warn-of-malicious-bomb-hoax-email/
[77]https://www.newslinetci.com/post/bomb-threat-temporarily-suspends-operations-at-jags-mccartney-international-airport-turks-and-caico;https://antigua.news/2024/05/06/caribbean-airports-faced-bomb-threats-leading-to-temporary-disruptions/
[78]https://alaskapublic.org/news/2024-06-10/drag-story-hour-carries-on-in-seward-despite-a-bomb-threat-and-evacuation
[79]https://newartcenter.org/hate-has-no-home-at-new-art/;https://www.boston.com/news/local-news/2024/10/06/drag-story-hour-canceled-at-somerville-library-following-bomb-threat/;https://www.iberkshires.com/story/78422/Bomb-Threat-Evacuates-Fundraiser-at-Pittsfield-s-Wander.html
[80]https://www.northernnewsnow.com/2024/06/18/northland-pride-organizers-alerted-authorities-after-bomb-threat-email/
[81]https://patch.com/new-jersey/montclair/montclair-library-evacuated-after-bomb-threat-no-devices-found-mpd
[82]https://www.wral.com/archive/21339741/
[83]https://crimewatch.net/us/pa/lancaster/da/11617/post/das-office-and-lancaster-city-police-%E2%80%93-bomb-threat-originated-overseas-connected-multiple
[84]https://austin.eater.com/2024/6/10/24175372/austin-brewtorium-las-ofrendas-drag-brunch-cancelation-bomb-threat
[85]https://www.washingtonblade.com/2024/04/08/drag-story-hour-bomb-threat-freddies/
[86]https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/01/03/bomb-threats-state-capitols/
[87]https://www.ktoo.org/2024/01/03/alaskas-capitol-among-u-s-state-houses-targeted-by-wednesday-wave-of-hoax-bomb-threats/
[88]https://www.kjzz.org/2024-01-03/content-1867318-bomb-threats-arizona-capitol-deemed-not-credible-dps
[89]https://www.wshu.org/connecticut-news/2024-01-03/connecticut-state-capitol-evacuated-in-response-to-bomb-threat
[90]https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/bomb-threat-received-at-georgia-state-capitol-wednesday-morning
[91]https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2024/01/03/authorities-responding-reported-bomb-threat-state-capitol/

Target and Dates	Number of Threats	Delivery	Locations	Impact
			Idaho,[92] Kentucky,[93] Maine,[94] Maryland,[95] Michigan,[96] Minnesota,[97] Mississippi,[98] Montana,[99] Nebraska,[100] New Hampshire,[101] Oklahoma,[102] South Carolina,[103] Utah,[104] Wisconsin,[105] Wyoming.[106]	abundance of caution. Some did not evacuate after receiving prior warning about the bomb threat hoax campaign.
New York Department of Environmental Conservation Offices; 3-4 November 2024	At least 12	Email	Allegany, Bath, Buffalo, Cortlandville, Elmira, New Platz, New York City, Sherbourne, Stamford, Stony Brook, Syracuse and Tarrytown.[107]	Some facilities briefly evacuated for security sweeps or closed.

[92]https://idahocapitalsun.com/2024/01/03/idaho-among-several-states-that-received-nonspecific-state-capitol-bomb-threats/
[93]https://www.wdrb.com/news/bomb-threat-prompts-evacuation-of-kentuckys-state-capitol-building/article_b825a6aa-aa4a-11ee-97a3-9f675d957246.html
[94]https://www.bangordailynews.com/2024/01/03/central-maine/maine-state-house-evacuated-bomb-threat/
[95]https://marylandmatters.org/2024/01/03/maryland-state-house-subject-to-bogus-bomb-threat/
[96]https://michiganadvance.com/2024/01/03/michigan-capitol-closes-wednesday-over-emailed-threat/
[97]https://www.kttc.com/2024/01/03/minnesota-state-capitol-out-lockdown-after-bomb-threat/
[98]https://www.wapt.com/article/mississippi-state-capitol-extra-security-bomb-threat/46274696
[99]https://www.kpax.com/news/montana-news/montana-capitol-evacuated-after-threat-threats-reported-at-multiple-state-capitols
[100]https://state-journal.com/2024/01/03/updated-capitol-evacuated-following-bomb-threat/
[101]https://www.wmur.com/article/new-hampshire-secretary-of-state-threat-hoax/46285938
[102]https://www.kosu.org/local-news/2024-01-03/oklahoma-law-enforcement-investigates-bomb-threat-hoax-at-state-capitol
[103]https://www.live5news.com/2024/01/03/sc-capitol-one-several-evacuated-after-email-bomb-threat/
[104]https://www.deseret.com/u-s-world/2024/1/3/24024167/bomb-threats-at-state-capitols/
[105]https://www.wmtv15news.com/2024/01/03/wisconsin-state-capitol-among-several-state-capitols-nationwide-who-received-emailed-threat/
[106]https://state-journal.com/2024/01/03/updated-capitol-evacuated-following-bomb-threat/
[107]https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2024/11/05/peanut-the-squirrel-seizure-euthanasia-new-york-bomb-threats-animal-santucary-social-media/76068515007/

Select Threat Actors Responsible for Similar Hoaxes Targeting Other Sectors

We compiled a sampling of known groups who have conducted similar bomb threat hoaxes targeting other non-election sectors to provide election officials and law enforcement with a broader understanding of this ecosystem. Many of these groups appear to be financially motivated and will either make ransom demands as part of their threats or advertise their services for hire on the internet. The select groups below have used an array of tactics, including some that overlapped with tactics we saw in the 2024 and 2025 bomb threat hoaxes, but we did not identify any specific links to election-related threats and these groups.

KNR

KNR is an online group that is part of the broader "accelerationist" ecosystem, where violent actors seek to exploit vulnerable populations to destabilize the current social and political order.[108] The group gained prominence in 2024 following a series of high-volume and emailed bomb threat hoaxes targeting schools and airports in India that triggered evacuations and police searches. KNR subsequently claimed responsibility for the threats. The Accelerationism Research Consortium in 2025 named KNR as a splinter or successor of 764, a violent transnational online extremist network.[109] We do not know the size and scope of KNR's activities, but one comment on urbandictionary[.]com noted the group operates on Whatsapp, Telegram, and Discord.[110] We highlight notable KNR-linked activity in the table below.

Date	Event	Delivery	Threat language	Attribution
1 May 2024	More than 100 schools in Delhi and surrounding areas received bomb threat emails.[111]	Mail.ru[112]	"There are many explosive devices in the school. Kill them wherever you meet and drive them out of the places from which they drove you...There are many explosive devices in the school."[113]	Self-claimed within June 18, 2024 attack.
18 June 2024	41 airports across India received	Google (Gmail)	"Hello, there are explosive hidden in the AIRPORT. The bombs will soon explode. You will	Self-claimed in email.

[108]https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/pr/leaders-764-arrested-and-charged-operating-global-child-exploitation-enterprise
[109]https://www.accresearch.org/shortanalysis/svjdmt1twn9ccz0c4uxnbqrauywwcn
[110]https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=knr
[111]https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/bomb-threat-in-dps-dwarka-campus-searched-nothing-suspicious-found-2533778-2024-05-01
[112]https://www.indiatoday.in/amp/india/story/delhi-school-bomb-scare-why-miscreants-used-russian-mail-service-2534042-2024-05-01
[113]https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/many-explosive-devices-said-email-sent-to-ncr-schools-101714547214413.html

Date	Event	Delivery	Threat language	Attribution
	emailed bomb threat hoaxes.[114]		all die. THE GROUP “KNR” is behind this massacre. “KNR” is also behind the May 1st, Delhi Schools Attack.”[115]	
8-9 December 2024	40 schools in Delhi received emailed bomb threats and demanded a $30K ransom.[116]	Google (Gmail)	“I planted multiple bombs inside the building. The bombs are small and hidden very well. It will not cause very much damage to the building, but many people will be injured when the bombs detonate. You all deserve to suffer and lose limbs. If I do not receive 30,000 dollars, the group 'KNR' is behind this attack.”[117]	Self-claimed in email.

Terrorizers111

Terrorizers111 operates as an anonymous threat actor that claimed responsibility for mass bomb threat campaigns targeting courts, hospitals, synagogues, schools, airports, and other public institutions in the United States and India since at least early 2024. Media reporting attributes hundreds of hoax threats to this group, with their highest operational tempo occurring in India in 2025. The group often claims credit for the attacks or repeats language patterns and reuses email accounts. No one has publicly identified the individuals behind the group. We highlight notable Terrorizers111-linked activity in the table below.

Date	Event	Delivery	Threat language	Attribution
4 January 2024	At least five locations in Massachusetts received emailed bomb threats.[118]	Google (Gmail)	“I placed multiple explosives inside of your Court, but also inside of every Court within your state. The explosives are well hidden and they will go off in a few hours. You will all end up dead.”[119]	Self-claimed in email.
4 May 2024	At least 23 synagogues and Jewish institutions received emailed bomb threats.[120]	Unknown	“Hello, if you see this email, just have notice of a bomb I have set inside of your building…you have a few hours to disarm or else blood will shatter everywhere.”[121]	Self-claimed in email.

[114]https://indianexpress.com/article/india/airport-bomb-threats-over-mail-patna-jaipur-chennai-delhi-9400047
[115]https://thelivenagpur.com/2024/06/18/bomb-threat-e-mail-received-to-aai-mail-nagpur-airport-from-an-unknown-e-mail-id/
[116]https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/at-least-40-delhi-schools-receive-bomb-threats-via-email-search-underway-124120900129_1.html
[117]https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/at-least-40-delhi-schools-receive-bomb-threats-via-email-search-underway-124120900129_1.html
[118]https://thisweekinworcester.com/bomb-threats-dudley-concord-010423
[119]https://nantucketcurrent.com/news/bomb-threat-evacuates-nantucket-town-county-building
[120]https://jewishlink.news/manhattan-synagogues-face-bomb-threats-amid-rising-antisemitism/
[121]https://jewishlink.news/manhattan-synagogues-face-bomb-threats-amid-rising-antisemitism/

Date	Event	Delivery	Threat language	Attribution
18-22 August 2025	At least 180 schools in Delhi received bomb threats over the span of 4 days.[122]	Encrypted email services through Tor browser.[123]	"We are Terrorizers111 and ViLE group. We planted bombs all over your building and every major ward, pipe bombs, chemical devices, timers in ICUs, operation threatres[sic], maternity wards, emergency exits, and admin offices ready to rip everything apart."[124]	Self-claimed in email.

KirkMafia

KirkMafia emerged in December 2025 as a transnational swatting-for-hire/violence-for-hire group that claimed responsibility for swatting incidents primarily targeting livestreamers, high-profile internet personalities, schools, malls, theme parks, and public venues in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Israel.[125] Although KirkMafia adopts branding centered on Charlie Kirk, the group lacks a specific political ideology and is primarily driven by financial gain. KirkMafia uses hoax phone calls—likely leveraging voice changers, regionally-accurate accents, and sound effects—to trigger armed police responses and force targets to pay mitigation ransoms. The group uses Telegram to organize, advertise its services, and publicize its activities, and two associated personas have a public affiliation on the platform. We highlight notable KirkMafia-linked activity in the table below.

Date	Event	Delivery	Threat language	Attribution[126]
8 February 2026	Attempted swatting incident at the Super Bowl.	Phone call.	Unknown.	Self-claimed, according to Dataminr.
25 February 2026	Attempted swatting of livestreamer iShowSpeed.	Phone call.	Unknown.	Self-claimed on Telegram.
11 March 2026	Hoax report of a mass shooting and bomb threat at Disneyland, leading to police deployment.	Phone call.	Unknown.	Self-claimed, according to Dataminr.

[122]https://theprint.in/india/around-100-delhi-schools-receive-bomb-threat-mails-third-such-incident-in-four-days/2726339/
[123]https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/terrorizers-111-cyber-group-behind-serial-bomb-threats-is-using-tor-browser-delhi-police/articleshow/124957562.cms
[124]https://theprint.in/india/around-100-delhi-schools-receive-bomb-threat-mails-third-such-incident-in-four-days/2726339/
[125]https://www.dataminr.com/resources/threat-actor-profile-kirk-mafia/
[126]https://www.dataminr.com/resources/threat-actor-profile-kirk-mafia/

Purgatory

Purgatory operated from 2023 to 2025 as a swatting-for-hire group and claimed responsibility for hoax mass shooting threats targeting universities, schools, casinos, and airports in the United States. The group used fabricated violent emergencies delivered by Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) as their primarily swatting method and used both Google Voice and TextNow in early campaigns.[127] Purgatory used Telegram, Instagram, and Discord to support coordination and publicity and advertised prices for specific targets ranging from $95 to $120.[128] Federal authorities found individuals connected to the group guilty of federal swatting charges in 2025.[129] The Center for Internet Security assesses Purgatory is no longer active, but it has observed Purgatory members participating in similar swatting groups.[130] We highlight notable Purgatory-linked activity in the table below.

Date	Event	Delivery	Threat language	Attribution
4 January 2024[131]	Hoax Delaware high school shooting.	Google Voice and TextNow.	Unknown	Federal indictments.
21-25 August 2025[132]	At least 10 universities across the United States received swatting calls.	VoIP	Unknown	Center for Internet Security.

[127] https://whyy.org/articles/purgatory-swatting-fbi-indictment-delaware-christina-school/
[128] https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/30/us/school-shooting-hoax-universities-purgatory-swatting.html
[129] https://www.justice.gov/usao-md/pr/ohio-man-pleads-guilty-federal-swatting-charges
[130] https://www.cisecurity.org/insights/case-study/information-sharing-following-college-active-shooter-reports
[131] https://www.justice.gov/usao-md/pr/ohio-man-pleads-guilty-federal-swatting-charges
[132] https://www.cisecurity.org/insights/case-study/information-sharing-following-college-active-shooter-reports

Outlook for Bomb Threat Hoaxes to the 2026 Elections

Threat actors will undoubtedly update and improve their methodology in issuing bomb threat hoaxes ahead of the 2026 elections, making early collaboration between election officials and law enforcement counterparts critical. New technologies will enable some actors to evolve and law enforcement will likely arrest or otherwise disrupt others.[133] [134] For example, previous actors sent threats via email; actors could leverage phone and VoIP technology and include more specific and alarming claims like threats of an active shooter. Election officials and law enforcement have the unenviable task of responding to these hoaxes in a way that both addresses the security concerns and reduces the disruptive impact to voters and election processes. This collaboration will be key in limiting the threat actor(s') ability to exploit fear amongst citizens and the media and cause chaos and confusion. We outline some of the ways that actors could shift their approaches below.

Perceived Success Strengthens Resolve

Threat actors may perceive that their tactics successfully disrupted the 2024 and 2025 elections and could plan to repeat the methodology. For example, officials temporarily closed some polling locations and required a court order to extend voting hours. Election offices halted vote counting while security sweeps were conducted. The widespread media attention the actors behind those threats received may strengthen their resolve to conduct similar campaigns in 2026.

Past Campaigns Improve Approach

Threat actors may also learn what "worked" and what did not "work" in terms of disruptive impact in the 2024 elections. For example, some emails went straight to spam folders and election officials did not see them for days, after which authorities deemed them not credible and the threats did not cause any disruption. Actors may alter their delivery method to ensure recipients see their threats in a timely manner and act upon them.

Copycats Emerge

If individuals or groups not originally involved in the 2024 and 2025 threats perceive those campaigns as successful, additional actors may seek to pile on in 2026. This could amplify the volume of bomb threat hoaxes, create more noise, and make it difficult for election officials and law enforcement to quickly and accurately distinguish between coordinated hoax campaigns and real security threats.

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[133] https://www.cbsnews.com/news/swatting-hoaxer-admits-to-helping-target-dozens-of-members-of-congress-and-social-media-influencers/

[134] https://www.justice.gov/usao-edpa/pr/charges-announced-against-member-online-cybercriminal-group-purgatory-placing-swatting

AI Could Enable More Threats

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has evolved significantly since 2024 and people and bad actors have adopted the technology. AI could enable bad actors in several ways:

- To create higher quality threats such as more natural sounding threatening language, voices, video “evidence”
- To send a higher volume of threats such as more rapid research of targets
- To develop more complex threats such as combining multiple AI-generated phone calls with emails and fake social media posts or news reports.

Security Concerns Drive Tactics

Threat actors leverage email service providers that provide some anonymity from US law enforcement, such as Mailum/CyberFear or foreign platforms like mail.ru. Actors will almost certainly continue to seek out privacy-forward platforms to send these bomb threat emails to election officials and polling places.

Recommendations for Election Officials and Law Enforcement

Given the impact bomb threat hoaxes have on our election processes and resources, we offer four recommendations for both election officials and law enforcement to help reduce the impact of these hoax campaigns.

- **Share Threats with the Task Force:** If you receive a threat, we encourage you to share it with the task force via email at report@socialscout.llc. Our team is here to support election officials and law enforcement nationwide. More information better enables us to track the TTPs threat actors are using and push out relevant guidance to the community.
- **Expect a Threat and Plan Accordingly:** Plan before Election Day, make staff and key partners aware of the plan, and identify available resources to respond. Make sure your response plan includes an effective messaging strategy to ensure election workers feel safe doing their jobs, voters know where they can go to vote in case of disruptions, and the media has accurate information to share with the public. Threats may arrive at the hyper-local or polling place level—ensure that any plan includes communication with these election workers and facility owners.
- **Share with Authorities and Partners:** If your jurisdiction receives a threat, share quickly and widely with law enforcement, neighboring jurisdictions, and partners.
- **Educate Your Team and Your Partners:** Organizations have developed numerous resources, including this report, to help election officials and law enforcement best prepare for election threats. Whether your jurisdiction has experienced numerous similar threats or not, the resources we link below can help you learn more about the problem and plan to mitigate it.
    - Bomb Threats in Election Settings: Guidance for Law Enforcement (Committee for Safe and Secure Elections)
    - Preparation Kept Bomb Threats from Disrupting 2024 Election (The Brennan Center for Justice)
    - Managing Election Site Evacuations (Election Security Exchange)

Appendix A: Methodology and Tradecraft

This assessment focuses on large scale threat hoax campaigns where actors tried to cause chaos and disrupt the election across numerous locations and is not exhaustive of all bomb threats experienced during the 2024 and 2025 election. Our team examined copies of 53 unique bomb threats across eight states and over 48 jurisdictions received in November 2024 and November 2025, which represents approximately 20 percent of the circa 280 bomb threat hoaxes targeting recent elections that individuals have reported.

- We obtained detailed samples of bomb threats fromArizona, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, Oregon, and Pennsylvania. We are greatly interested in acquiring additional bomb threat reports. If you have received a threat since 2024 and have not shared it with us, please send a copy to report@socialscout.llc.
- We did not include cases where one individual made an isolated threat to one location as that was outside the scope of our project.
- To surface additional content on the threats, we searched phrases from the emails referenced in publicly available sources to identify where others may have used similar or identical language, usernames, or other content across discussion boards and community forums on the surface and dark web.

Appendix B: Definitions of Probability and Confidence

Use of Probabilistic Analytic Language

We use terms such as “likely” and “probably” to convey analytic judgments. The table below shows the spectrum of how those terms correlate with percentages of likelihood.

Assessment Language	Almost no chance	Very unlikely	Unlikely/ Improbably	Possibly	Likely/ Probably	Very likely	Almost certainly
Percentages	<5%	6-20%	21-45%	46-55%	56-80%	81-95%	96-99%

Use of Confidence Levels

Where helpful, we also include confidence levels that highlight the quality of information underpinning an analytic judgment.

- **Low confidence** usually indicates that the information is too fragmentary or questionable to make solid analytic judgments.
- **Moderate confidence** means the pieces of information are credibly sourced and plausible but not highly corroborated.
- **High confidence** is associated with high-quality information and data that is corroborated by other credible information.