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INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

WOMEN ADVANCING

**WHITE RACIALLY AND
ETHNICALLY MOTIVATED
VIOLENT EXTREMIST**

**RADICALIZATION
AND RECRUITMENT**

6 October 2021

(U) **WARNING: This product contains references to racial, sexual, and gendered violence.**

Classified By: [REDACTED] | Derived From: [REDACTED] | Declassify On: [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]

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Women Advancing White Racially and Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremist Radicalization and Recruitment

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[REDACTED] This Intelligence Assessment (IA) examines some of the roles that women have adopted to participate in white racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism and contribute to the endurance and resonance of its narratives worldwide. This IA also highlights white racially and ethnically motivated violent extremist (REMVE) vulnerabilities and opportunities to expand European and Five Eyes governments' and civil societies' countermessaging efforts.

- [REDACTED] We have adopted the term white REMVEs to describe those individuals and groups who incite, facilitate, or conduct violence because they believe that their perception of an idealized white European ethnic identity is under attack from people who embody and support multiculturalism and globalization.
- [REDACTED] For the purposes of this IA, we focus on a subset of women who are supporters of, or sympathetic to, transnational white REMVEs, including groups such as National Action and Nordic Resistance Movement, as well as the broader global movement, which is more diffuse and decentralized.
- [REDACTED] We define "white REMVE-sympathetic" actors as individuals or groups who may not openly advocate violence but amplify white REMVE narratives regarding their perceptions of racial and ethnic hierarchy, as well as perceived threats from those they see as advocating multiculturalism and globalization.

[REDACTED] Our assessment is based primarily on open-source reporting—including academic and psychological literature—as well as [REDACTED] Minimal reporting is available on female participation in white racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism and terrorism more broadly. Terrorism—including white racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism, Sunni jihadism, and Shia militancy—is predominantly male-driven, which has probably resulted in a reporting bias that skews toward men's activities.

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]



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(U) Summary

We assess that female members have been emerging as key players of the transnational white racially and ethnically motivated violent extremist (REMVE) movement, taking on diverse roles to advance white REMVE goals—including the white REMVE view of traditional motherhood—and successfully participating in newer roles in propaganda and recruitment. Some foreign white REMVE men have reacted negatively to women’s heightened visibility in the radicalization and recruitment process, including by making abusive comments, suggesting that tailored strategic messaging and countering violent extremism campaigns that highlight the limitations and pitfalls that women face in the movement might be successful in dissuading women from joining and in spurring participants to disengage.

- Women have been the targets of foreign white REMVE recruitment campaigns, probably because white REMVE women have proven to be proficient at migrating fringe extremist narratives into mainstream discourse and drawing other women into the movement.
- Male counterparts have expressed both limited public acceptance and private hostility to the broadening role of female white REMVEs, most likely to balance the goal of expanding membership with their desire to maintain full control of the movement.
- We assess that strategic messaging campaigns abroad informed by former female white REMVEs and sympathizers would probably help deter women from joining the white REMVE movement and taking on broader roles by highlighting the poor treatment that women face and the limits to their authority within the movement.

Female members abroad have been emerging as prominent players in the transnational white racially and ethnically motivated violent extremist (REMVE) movement, spanning traditional motherhood-focused roles aimed at advancing white REMVE goals and roles

that capitalize on their skills in propaganda to bring in new recruits. Some men, who have traditionally dominated leadership roles in the white REMVE movement, have reacted negatively to women’s heightened visibility in the radicalization and recruitment process,

tutorials, which feature discussions about the importance of organic food alongside subtle narratives about racial purity and the defense of white European heritage,

██████████ a German nonprofit organization.¹⁷¹⁸¹⁹

- (U) ██████████ In 2017, Lauren Southern—a prominent white REMVE-sympathetic Canadian commentator who amplified conspiracy theories that the white population is decreasing because of increasing immigration and birthrates among non-white groups—posted a makeup tutorial interwoven with anti-Muslim sentiment to her US-based video streaming platform channel, which at the time had more than 100,000 subscribers, according to US and UK press reporting.²⁰²¹ Southern, who claims she has since exited the movement, had posted multiple videos that were peppered with extremist rhetoric and used sex appeal to draw in sympathizers; one female British admirer stated that this better positioned Southern to sell white REMVE-sympathetic narratives to the admirer's sons, according to a US press report.²²
- (U) Female members of NRM have aided propaganda efforts by providing translations of extremist texts, proofreading articles published on the group's official website, and distributing leaflets with extremist content, according to a US-based NGO.²³

██████████ Female-Driven Recruitment Helping Expand White REMVEs' Appeal

██████████ Female white REMVE sympathizers' growing international prominence and their skill in appealing to broad audiences has probably drawn a wider array of recruits into the white REMVE movement and has made women themselves the targets of white REMVE

recruitment campaigns, according to US academic research.²⁴ Female white REMVE recruiters have probably helped attract additional women to the movement by capitalizing on shared experiences, as well as attracting sympathetic minors and men. Women now compose 10 to 15 percent of any given national white REMVE scene, according to academic estimates.²⁵²⁶

- ██████████ In Saxony, Germany, militant neo-Nazi women, ██████████, have been recruiting new members in rural communities at local folk festivals and youth group gatherings, during which they teach and encourage children to sing Hitler Youth^b songs, ██████████.²⁷ Their activities have most likely increased these children's vulnerability to white REMVE influence.
- (U) Elisa Hategan, a former member of Canadian neo-Nazi group Heritage Front, stated that the group enlisted women to serve as recruiters because the group's leaders thought that women were better positioned to propagate xenophobia and hate when it was obscured by perceived white feminine innocence. Hategan said that she was instructed to flirt with potential male recruits to get donations, according to a Canadian press report.²⁸ White REMVE women have weaponized a common white REMVE theme—which suggests that white REMVE men need to protect women and their virtue—to cloak violent extremist narratives, according to UK academic research.²⁹
- (U) The NA created the Miss Hitler pageant to highlight female support of the movement, recruit more women, and challenge society's perceptions that white REMVEs are misogynistic, according to UK press reporting and US academic research.³⁰³¹³²

^b (U) ██████████ Hitler Youth was the wing of the Nazi Party that indoctrinated children with Nazi ideology.



(U [REDACTED])³³

(U [REDACTED]) Cutter, nicknamed the “Buchenwald Princess” in reference to the World War II-era Nazi death camp, photographed as the winner of the Miss Hitler Pageant in 2016.³⁴³⁵

[REDACTED] Misogyny and Male Skepticism Set Limits on Women’s Roles

[REDACTED] As the roles of female white REMVEs and sympathizers diversify, they have faced grudging public acceptance and private hostility from their male counterparts, suggesting that women are likely to face limits on their ability to advance into leadership positions in the white REMVE movement. The varied reactions from male white REMVEs probably reflect attempts to balance their desire to increase movement membership with their desire to maintain full control of the movement.

- [REDACTED]
- (U [REDACTED]) Male white REMVEs also often berate women in online white REMVE forums, such as by demanding proof that they have sufficient knowledge of popular white REMVE-associated texts,³⁸ casting aspersions on their intentions,³⁹ and accusing them of being “trathots”—derogatory slang suggesting that women are not living up

to “traditional” values—according to white REMVE postings online and US press reporting.⁴⁰⁴¹

[REDACTED] Strategic Messaging Campaigns To Impede White REMVE Recruitment of Women and Blunt Their Appeal

[REDACTED] We assess that strategic messaging campaigns abroad could help deter women from joining the transnational white REMVE movement and taking on expanded roles, such as by highlighting the poor treatment that white REMVE women face and the limits to their authority within the movement. Messaging focused on the contrast between how male white REMVEs publicly revere women while privately denigrating and marginalizing them probably would deter potential female recruits, spur disillusionment among longstanding participants, and sow discord within white REMVE circles. Studies in the Netherlands suggest that women rarely develop strong ties to groups once they are in the white REMVE movement and that they eventually become socially isolated and dissatisfied with how men treat them, judging from US academic research.⁴²

- [REDACTED] Some women might be deterred from joining the movement if they are legally held responsible for participating in attacks by male white REMVEs. In 2018, German authorities sentenced Beate Zschape, a female member of the National Socialist Underground (NSU), to life in prison for killing 10 people, nine of whom were immigrants. Zschape’s two male collaborators, also NSU members, committed a double suicide, according to German and UK press reporting,⁴³⁴⁴⁴⁵ probably in part to avoid detention and prosecution.

- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED] Strategic communications asserting that women play subservient roles in white REMVE groups would probably challenge perceptions that women become empowered by joining them. A member of the Angels Division, the female arm of the UK-based white REMVE-sympathetic group the English Defense League became frustrated with the disorganization and the limited leadership opportunities for women, and she eventually left once she realized the messaging that the Angels Division “stands beside their men, not behind them” was not true in practice, according to US academic research.⁴⁷

[REDACTED] Considering Tailored Gender-Conscious Approaches

[REDACTED] Firsthand accounts of experiences in the white REMVE movement from former female white REMVEs and sympathizers provide a helpful framework for the types of themes and messages that would resonate most. Further research into this content would also identify individuals who have the credibility to deliver messages intended to dissuade vulnerable women from joining or sympathizing with the white REMVE movement.

- [REDACTED] Messaging campaigns could feature statements from reformed female white REMVEs highlighting the pervasive misogyny and mistreatment that they faced in the white REMVE movement to dissuade future female recruits from joining. In October 2020, Southern provided an interview detailing her experience with hostility from men in the white REMVE movement, which probably led to her claimed exit from the movement, judging from a US press report (see appendix).⁴⁸
- [REDACTED] Testimonies from former female members would probably create doubt among potential recruits that they would ever gain prominent roles in the movement.
- [REDACTED] Germany’s Expert Center on Gender and Rightwing Extremism has developed tailored, gender-conscious best practices on how to provide off-ramps for women involved in the white REMVE movement, which could serve as models for future messaging. The best practices include ensuring physical protection for women who are at risk of violent backlash if they leave the movement.⁴⁹⁵⁰

RADICALIZATION AND DISENGAGEMENT PATHWAYS AMONG FEMALE WHITE RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENT EXTREMISTS AND SYMPATHIZERS

We highlighted the radicalization and disengagement paths of a female white racially and ethnically motivated violent extremist (REMVE), German national Beate Zschape, and a white REMVE sympathizer, Canadian national Lauren Southern, to illustrate the catalysts that drive individuals during the different stages of the radicalization process. We assess that an individual's

motivations for participating in extremist and terrorist activities stem from a complex interplay of psychological and social factors. Understanding the ways in which women get involved and subsequently become disillusioned can help CT practitioners design interventions to discourage women from joining the white REMVE movement and encourage existing members to disengage.

(U) This table is Unclassified except where noted; all photos are U.

ENTRY - BECOMING INVOLVED

During this entry phase, the movement appeals to an individual's unmet psychological needs for empowerment, enrichment, fulfillment, and certainty. Social networks typically facilitate entry into the group, according to academic and press reporting.

Zschape met fellow white REMVEs German nationals Uwe Boehnhardt and Uwe Mundlos in Jena, Germany, in the early 1990s, where they were introduced to white REMVE narratives at a youth club and later became known as the National Socialist Underground (NSU) trio, according to academic and press reporting, demonstrating how social connections can facilitate entry into violent extremism.



Zschape experienced an unstable childhood—never meeting her father, witnessing her mother's multiple divorces, and experiencing multiple moves—according to the same academic research, suggesting that Zschape may have desired a sense of belonging, which led to her reported dependence on Boehnhardt and Mundlos.

BEING INVOLVED

In this phase, an individual engages in extremist and terrorist activities, and personal motivations are subsumed by a sense of responsibility to the greater benefit of the group. Terrorist groups and extremist movements use a common ideological belief structure to maximize group unity and justify violence, according to academic and press reporting.

Zschape rented a garage for the group's nascent bombmaking attempts and contributed to the advancement of the group's goals by managing the money and maintaining local contacts to present a facade of normalcy, according to the same academic research.



Zschape posed with Boehnhardt, with whom she was romantically involved, according to the same academic research, illustrating that in the rare cases in which women directly participate in violence, it is often as part of a predominantly male group, rather than independently.

DISENGAGING

This is the exit phase for a member of an extremist or terrorist group. During this phase, disillusionment with the group often motivates an individual to leave, and social contacts and the promise of a landing spot outside the group typically help facilitate a departure, according to academic and press reporting.

In 2011, German authorities arrested Zschape for participating in two bombings in Cologne and organizing attacks that resulted in the deaths of 10 people, including nine immigrants, which Norwegian white REMVE Anders Breivik lauded in a letter he wrote to her in jail, according to UK press reporting. We lack information on the extent to which she has disengaged, but we judge that her role in the NSU has waned.



In 2018, Zschape, the only surviving member of the NSU trio, received a life sentence in prison for her involvement in a terrorist organization, according to UK press reporting.

(U) Figure source notes: 51525355555465748396051630566706807017214757677879604812839465868788

RADICALIZATION AND DISENGAGEMENT PATHWAYS AMONG FEMALE WHITE RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENT EXTREMISTS AND SYMPATHIZERS

(U) This table is Unclassified except where noted; all photos are U

ENTRY ► BECOMING INVOLVED

During this entry phase, the movement appeals to an individual's unmet psychological needs for empowerment, enrichment, fulfillment, and certainty. Social networks typically facilitate entry into the group, according to academic and press reporting

In 2015, white REMVE sympathizer Southern was struggling through college when she published her first viral video, titled, "Why I'm Not a Feminist," and later dropped out of school, according to a US press report, suggesting that her lack of academic success probably prompted a desire for purpose and certainty. We do not categorize Southern as a white REMVE. However, we assess that her spousal of narratives has contributed to the reach of some white REMVE ideologues.



Southern holds up the OK symbol, which some members of the movement have co-opted to mean "white power," judging from a US press report.

► BEING INVOLVED

In this phase, an individual engages in extremist and terrorist activities, and personal motivations are subsumed by a sense of responsibility to the greater benefit of the group. Terrorist groups and extremist movements use a common ideological belief structure to maximize group unity and justify violence, according to academic and press reporting

With each subsequent video, Southern gained popularity within the white REMVE movement. Southern asserted in a documentary that Black South Africans were as responsible for apartheid as white South Africans were, according to a US press report.



As of December 2020, Southern's video streaming channel—which includes her anti-Muslim makeup tutorial—had more than 600,000 subscribers across the globe.

► DISENGAGING

This is the exit phase for a member of an extremist or terrorist group. During this phase, disillusionment with the group often motivates an individual to leave, and social contacts and the promise of a landing spot outside the group typically help facilitate a departure, according to academic and press reporting

In November 2017, after enduring hostile criticism and unwanted sexual advances from men, Southern posted a video defending herself for being 22 years old without being married or having children, according to a US press report, highlighting how some women may become disillusioned after experiencing the violent misogyny that is pervasive throughout the white REMVE movement.



As of October 2020, Southern was living in Australia with her husband when she posed for a profile on her life after she reportedly left the movement because of online harassment. As of January 2020, the videos she created remained available on her channel, and she stated that she did not feel responsible for the spread of extremist narratives, according to a US press report.

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[REDACTED]

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