

## **Governor Abbott Forms Domestic Terrorism Task Force In The Wake Of El Paso Shooting**

### ***Directs DPS To Take Immediate Action Against Extremism***

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott today, under Article 4, Sections 1, 7, and 10 of the Texas Constitution, formed a Domestic Terrorism Task Force in the wake of the El Paso shooting to combat these hateful acts and extremism in Texas. The group of experts will analyze and provide advice on strategies to maximize law enforcement's ability to protect against acts of domestic terrorism. The task force will hold its first roundtable meeting with Governor Abbott on Friday, August 30th.

Additionally, the Governor today directed the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to take immediate action to combat any form of domestic terrorism in Texas including:

- Conducting a state intelligence assessment on the domestic terrorism threat in Texas.
- Establishing a Domestic Terrorism Section within the Texas Fusion Center to proactively seek, assess and monitor domestic terrorism and other mass casualty threats.
- Coordinating with the designated regional fusion centers in Texas to increase the detection and monitoring of domestic terrorism and other mass casualty threats.
- Establishing Domestic Terrorism Teams comprised of DPS Special Agents to provide immediate direct support to the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF), and increase the number of Special Agents assigned to the JTTFs to conduct domestic counterterrorism investigations.
- Increasing the number of DPS Special Agents and Analysts in the Texas Anti-Gang Centers conducting investigations on criminal gangs affiliated with Neo Nazi and White Nationalist groups and networks espousing terrorist attacks.

"Our top priority is to keep Texans safe in their communities," said Governor Abbott. "Part of that mission is to combat domestic terrorism and root out the extremist ideologies that fuel hatred and violence in our state. This task force brings together leaders with the expertise Texas needs to develop effective strategies and combat domestic terrorism. Texas is stronger when we come together in pursuit of a shared goal, and today's actions are vital steps in our ongoing fight against extremism and violence. We stand united against those who wish to bring harm to our state, and together we will build a safer future for every Texan."

The task force will meet quarterly, or at the call of the Governor, and will consist of the following members:

- Governor Greg Abbott
- Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick
- Attorney General Ken Paxton
- Speaker of the House Dennis Bonnen
- Colonel Steve McCraw, Department of Public Safety
- Chief W. Nim Kidd, Texas Division of Emergency Management
- Major General Tracy Norris, Texas Military Department
- Executive Director Amanda Crawford, Texas Department of Information Resources
- Executive Director Carter Smith, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
- Members of the United States Customs and Border Patrol
- Members of the United States Secret Service
- John Bash, United States Attorney -- Western District of Texas
- Jeff Murray, Department of Homeland Security
- Members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation
- K. Sunshine Stanek, District Attorney for Lubbock County
- Greg Allen, El Paso Police Chief

- Sheriff Eddie Guerra, Hidalgo County
- Captain Anthony Carter, Collin County Sheriff's Office, North Texas Fusion Center

Specific objectives of the task force will include:

- Analyzing current and emerging threats in Texas, and developing strategies that government entities can take to prevent and respond to such threats.
- Studying ways to increase interagency cooperation and collaboration between local, state, and federal agencies.
- Developing model tools, policies, and protocols to assist in fighting domestic terrorism.
- Providing advice and recommendations regarding state homeland security strategic planning, and relevant legislative recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature.