



## **CBCF EXECUTIVE ORDER TRACKER**

# **Designating Antifa as a Domestic Terrorist Organization**

**Date Issued:** September 22, 2025

**Topic:** Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement

### **WHAT DOES THIS EXECUTIVE ORDER DO?**

- This executive order designates “Antifa” as a domestic terrorist organization.
- The term “Antifa” **originated** in Germany in the 1930s to describe opponents of the fascistic Nazi Party. It came to prominence in the United States during President Trump first term in 2017. While scholars classify Antifa as a decentralized left-wing anti-fascist and anti-racist movement, and while it is not a registered nonprofit or corporation, the Trump Administration claims that Antifa is a “militarist, anarchist enterprise that explicitly calls for the overthrow of the United States Government, law enforcement authorities, and our system of law.”
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) outlines domestic terrorism as acts occurring within the jurisdiction of the United States that:
  - Are dangerous to human life
  - Violate criminal laws of the United States or of any State
  - Appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population or the policy of government; and,
  - Affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping.



## HOW WILL THIS EXECUTIVE ORDER BE ENFORCED?

- This executive order will be enforced by all federal departments and agencies.
- The order authorizes federal officials to investigate, disrupt, and dismantle illegal operations conducted by those they consider Antifa-affiliated actors.
- A terrorist designation allows national security agencies to surveil and investigate associated parties with minimal legal repercussions.

## HOW DOES THIS IMPACT BLACK COMMUNITIES?

- Because Antifa is not a cohesive organization with clear leadership, this order permits the Trump Administration to define who is a member. As a result, the White House may target Black people protesting racial injustice in a nonviolent manner as Antifa and subject them to legal penalties.
- The federal government has historically framed Black political dissidents as terrorists and/or threats to national security. In the wake of the Cold War, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) launched a surveillance campaign called [COINTELPRO](#) to address communism in the United States. It expanded the initiative in the 1960s to include investigations into anti-war organizations and civil rights advocates like the Black Panther Party, the NAACP, and Martin Luther King Jr. The FBI's expressed objective was to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, and discredit" groups and individuals deemed "Black National Hate Groups" and "Black Extremists," respectively. The FBI fabricated promotional materials, forged documents, spread false rumors, and was even linked to political violence and the death of Black activists all to curb the progress of the civil rights movement in the United States.



## HOW DOES THIS IMPACT BLACK COMMUNITIES?

- During the height of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, the FBI issued a **warning** about the danger of “Black Identity” groups, including the Movement for Black Lives. This executive order continues the pattern of federal agencies targeting Black activists for their political views.
- In 2021, President Trump and right-wing political commentators blamed Antifa for the January 6th Insurrection, falsely claiming that it was responsible for the attempted siege of the Capitol. In this order, the White House adds to this narrative, declaring that Antifa is recruiting young people to advance political violence and riots. In addition, the order asserts that left-wing activists and racial justice advocates are primarily responsible for political violence and protests against the Trump Administration. This rhetoric is dangerous not only because of the legal ramifications that come with domestic terrorism charges.
- Declaring Antifa a domestic terrorist organization also heightens the stakes for political discourse across the country. In this order, the White House identifies protestors outside of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities as Antifa actors. This false characterization of Antifa could leave Black protestors vulnerable to violent attacks from people who view them as a threat to the nation.
- Since the memo was published, President Trump has stated that he is considering declaring Antifa a foreign terrorist organization, which would have significantly more severe legal ramifications for the implicated parties. While the President has expressed his wishes, the State Department is the only agency that can formally designate foreign terrorist organizations.



## HOW ARE CBC MEMBERS RESPONDING?

- While countering claims that Antifa is a terrorist organization, members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) recognize that this order could foment political violence, which they have condemned outright. **Rep. Yvette D. Clarke**, Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, released the following statement after the assassination of Charlie Kirk.
  - “We must unequivocally reject violence in all its forms. Too many times in our nation's history, political differences have turned to violence – violence that our community, in particular, knows too well from the assassinations of Black leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Medger Evers, and Fred Hampton, among others. At the same time, we must condemn violence without abandoning our right to speak out against ideas that are inconsistent with our values as Americans.” [Full Statement](#)