



**Submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on
Intelligence and Security on its review into the listing of
Hizballah and The Base as terrorist organisations under the
Criminal Code Act 1995.**

Introduction

This Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC) submission is a response to the review commenced by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS) on December 22 into the listing of Hizballah and The Base as terrorist organisations under the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

The legislative basis for terrorism listings is Division 102 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995*, which lays out the criteria for designation; namely, that an organisation:

1. is directly or indirectly engaged in, preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of a terrorist act; or
2. advocates the doing of a terrorist act.

AIJAC's position on this review can be summarised as follows:

- AIJAC supports the Australian Government’s decision to repeal the listing of Hizballah’s External Security Organisation (ESO) and to specify Hizballah, in its entirety, as a terrorist organisation under Division 102 of Australia’s Criminal Code.
- AIJAC supports the Australian Government’s decision to list The Base as a terrorist organisation under Division 102 of Australia’s Criminal Code. AIJAC recommends the Australian Government consider expanding listings to a broader range of offshoots, aliases and networked individuals in the nationalist and racist violent extremism (NRVE) milieu.

In February 2020, a member of Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS) told the *Australian* that there was “bipartisan support within the PJCIS for Hezbollah to be listed as a terrorist organisation.”¹ On May 11, 2021, the PJCIS began its review into the relisting of Hizballah's External Security Organisation (ESO), designated by Australia as a terrorist organisation since June 5 2003. AIJAC’s submission to that review detailed that Hizballah is a unitary organisation and that therefore the ESO listing should be expanded to the entire group, both to bring Australia into line with its allies and partners like, inter alia, the US, UK and Canada, as well as to better reflect the reality of Hizballah.²

On June 22, 2021, the PJCIS unanimously recommended that not only should the ESO be re-listed, but also that the Government consider expanding its listing to include the whole organisation of Hizballah.³ The Hon Karen Andrews MP, Minister for Home Affairs, officially announced the Government would expand the listing to the entirety of Hizballah on November 24, 2021.⁴ Simultaneously, the Minister announced that Australia would list The

¹ Schliebs, M (2020) “Terrorist links not enough to restrict Sydney man Ali Haidar,” *The Australian* (17 Feb), <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/terrorist-links-not-enough-to-restrict-sydney-man-ali-haidar/news-story/69ac548633dada5d27b13741f8085eec>.

² Submission from the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence and Security on the relisting of Hizballah ESO (May 2021), https://aijac.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Hezbollah_relisting_PJCIS_May211.pdf.

³ “PJCIS recommends Government consider expanding terrorist listing of Hizballah” (22 June 2021), https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/About_the_House_News/Media_Releases/PJCIS_recommends_Government_consider_expanding_terrorist_listing_of_Hizballah.

⁴ “Media Release: Morrison government to list two new terrorist organisations” (24 Nov 2021), <https://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/KarenAndrews/Pages/morrison-government-list-two-new-terrorist-organisations.aspx>.

Base – an NRVE group whose name is intentionally the English translation of Al-Qaeda – under the *Criminal Code*, indicating a renewed focus on far-right extremism.

Hizballah

A unitary organisation

As noted by the chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security Senator James Paterson in June, “The evidence provided to the committee was overwhelmingly supportive of proscribing Hizballah in its entirety as a terrorist organisation, rather than only the ESO. On the strength of this evidence, the committee thinks it’s time for the government to consider expanding the listing as all of our Five Eyes partners have done.”

The Department of Home Affairs, in its own submission to this review, noted that three of Australia’s Five Eyes allies – the US, Canada and the UK – have long designated the group in its entirety, while New Zealand designates Hizballah’s entire so-called “military wing”.⁵

AIJAC detailed in its May 2021 submission that Hizballah is a unitary organisation whose “wings” cannot be detached from the main organisation, as the group’s leadership has attested. Hizballah Deputy Secretary-General Naim Qassem said in 2012:

“We don't have a military wing and a political one; we don't have Hizballah on one hand and the resistance party on the other... Every element of Hizballah, from commanders to members as well as our various capabilities, is in the service of the resistance, and we have nothing but the resistance as a priority.”⁶

The leader of Hizballah’s parliamentary delegation, Mohammad Raad, reiterated in 2013:

⁵Submission by Home Affairs Minister Karen Andrews on the Review of the listings of Hizballah and The Base as terrorist organisations under the Criminal Code, p. 7.

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Intelligence_and_Security/2listings2021/Submissions.

⁶“AIJAC submission to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence and Security review into the relisting of Hizballah ESO” (28 May 2021), pp. 3-4. <https://aijac.org.au/featured/aijac-submission-to-the-parliamentary-joint-standing-committee-on-intelligence-and-security-review-into-the-relisting-of-hizballah-eso/>.

“The Hizballah military wing is a lie invented by the Europeans because they feel a need to communicate with us and they want to make a delusional separation between the so called military and political wings.”⁷

The group’s Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah even told journalist Nicholas Blanford in 2003 that he was indirectly involved in overseeing military operations.⁸

Terrorism

Hizballah has directly engaged in terrorism, including several mass-casualty bombings against Israeli and Jewish targets in South America – including the bombing of the Israeli embassy in Argentina in 1992, the bombing of the AMIA Jewish Centre in Argentina in 1994 and the bombing of Alas Chiricanas Flight 901 over Panama in 1994 – and attempted attacks in Thailand throughout the 1990s, as well as launching thousands of rockets at Israeli civilians in 2006. The most recent successful attack attributed to Hizballah was the bombing of Israeli tourists aboard a bus in Bulgaria in 2012, which allegedly involved dual Australian-Lebanese citizen Meliad Farah. Its activities, including the stockpiling of explosives across the world and intelligence gathering, likely continue, as noted in the Department of Home Affairs’ submission.⁹

Additionally, Hizballah has for decades supported other terrorist organisations listed under the *Criminal Code*, including Hamas’ Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, financially and logistically, and openly expresses rhetorical support for terrorist attacks.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Blanford, N (2011), *Warriors of God: Inside Hezbollah's Thirty-Year Struggle Against Israel*, Random House, New York, p.124.

⁹ p.7.

Hizballah acts as the Lebanese proxy of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), and is used to arm, train and fund Iran's other regional proxies and itself engage in Iran's wars from Yemen to Syria, including allegedly helping the Houthis launch missiles at civilian targets in the Gulf.¹⁰ As part of Iran's close relationship with Al-Qaeda, much of whose leadership has been based in Iran for decades and where Israel assassinated its deputy leader in November 2020,¹¹ Hizballah reportedly helped train Al-Qaeda emir Ayman al-Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad group in Lebanon and maintains an operational relationship with the group.¹²

Crime and fundraising in Australia

Hizballah is known to have fundraising and criminal links in Australia, as detailed in AIJAC's May submission.¹³ Since then, further allegations of Hizballah fundraising and criminal activity in Australia have emerged.¹⁴ In order to bankroll its military and terrorist activities, Hizballah operates a global criminal syndicate involved in narcotics, money-laundering and many other criminal activities.¹⁵ This includes the dangerous rise of the Syrian narco-state, with which Hizballah is inextricably intertwined, and its production and export of hundreds of millions of pills of the amphetamine captagon across the world, including to Malaysia and the rest of Australia's neighbourhood. Hizballah has even reportedly begun overseeing a crystal meth export.¹⁶ Hizballah is also deeply involved in narcotics trafficking and other

¹⁰ "Iran, Hezbollah aid Yemen rebel strikes: Saudi-led coalition", *AFP* (26 Dec 2021), <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20211226-iran-hezbollah-aid-yemen-rebel-strikes-saudi-led-coalition>.

¹¹ Adam Goldman, Eric Schmitt, Farnaz Fassihi and Ronen Bergman (2020), "Al Qaeda's No. 2, Accused in U.S. Embassy Attacks, Was Killed in Iran", *New York Times* (13 Nov), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/13/world/middleeast/al-masri-abdullah-qaeda-dead.html>.

¹² Moghadam, A (2017), "Marriage of Convenience: The Evolution of Iran and al-Qa'ida's Tactical Cooperation", Volume 10, Issue 4, *Combatting Terrorism Center* (April) <https://ctc.usma.edu/marriage-of-convenience-the-evolution-of-iran-and-al-qaidas-tactical-cooperation/>.

¹³ pp. 4-6.

¹⁴ Ottolenghi, E (2021), "The Laundromat: Hezbollah's Money-Laundering and Drug-Trafficking Networks in Latin America", *Mideast Security and Policy Studies* No. 194, *Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies* (14 July) <https://besacenter.org/hezbollah-money-laundering-drug-trafficking/>.

¹⁵ Meyer, J (2017), "The secret backstory of how Obama let Hezbollah off the hook", *Politico* <https://www.politico.com/interactives/2017/obama-hezbollah-drug-trafficking-investigation/>.

¹⁶ Hubbard, B and Saad, H (2021), "On Syria's Ruins, a Drug Empire Flourishes", *New York Times* (5 Dec) <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/05/world/middleeast/syria-drugs-captagon-assad.html>.

destructive criminal activity as a partner of the Venezuelan regime, itself long allied with Syria and Iran, and across South America.¹⁷ In 2017, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that a Sydney-based Hizballah official, who is also a major crime figure and money-lauderer, helped facilitate Chinese arms deals with Iran.¹⁸

There can be no clean separation between Hizballah as a unitary terrorist organisation and Hizballah as a crime syndicate, as the latter activities fund the former and are incredibly destructive to Australia. In late July, Australian Federal Police Commissioner Reece Kershaw declared that “transnational serious organised crime” (TSOC) was more dangerous to Australian lives and society than terrorism, particularly money-laundering and drug trafficking activities.¹⁹ This, however, could be viewed as a false binary, best demonstrated by Hizballah’s activities as a TSOC group within Australia, as well as a terrorist organisation.

Having satisfied itself that Hizballah met the criteria under Division 102 of the *Criminal Code*; that the distinction between its ESO and other “wings” were arbitrary; and that the benefits of listing outweighed any potential costs, no information has emerged that should cause PJCIS and the government to reconsider its listing of Hizballah in its entirety.

¹⁷Lobel, O (2019), “From Teheran to Caracas”, *Australia / Israel Review* (28 Feb) <https://aijac.org.au/australia-israel-review/from-teheran-to-caracas/>.

¹⁸McKenzie, N and Baker, R (2017), “The Sydney crime figure, Chinese intelligence and the terrorists”, *Sydney Morning Herald* (29 July) <https://www.smh.com.au/national/the-sydney-crime-figure-chinese-intelligence-and-the-terrorists-20170728-gxl1z9.html>.

¹⁹ “National Press Club address” (2021), *Australian Federal Police* (28 July) <https://www.afp.gov.au/news-media/national-speeches/national-press-club-address-28-july-2021>.

The Base

The Australian Government classifies The Base as “a nationalist and racist violent extremist (NRVE) group” that “operates as a decentralised movement modelled on ‘leaderless resistance’”:

“The Base espouses a national socialist and accelerationist ideology – preparing and pushing for a ‘race war’, which it believes will cause societal collapse and the subsequent creation of a ‘white ethno-state’. As accelerationists, members of The Base believe societal collapse can be expedited through violence, including lone-actor terrorist attacks.”²⁰

The Base, an English translation of Al-Qaeda, was founded in 2018 by Rinaldo Nazzaro, drawing on infamous neo-Nazi James Mason’s ideology, including the strategy of using autonomous terrorist cells conducting an insurgency.²¹ The group recently fell prey to an FBI sting operation that revealed chilling plans to start a ‘race war’ in the United States, murder police officers, slaughter ideological opponents and attack critical infrastructure, while a whistleblower also revealed the extent of its plans for a violent insurgency to *The Guardian*.²²

In 2021, Deputy Federal Police Commissioner Ian McCartney warned that NRVE groups and individuals are “the fastest-growing threat” to Australia.²³ ASIO Director-General Mike Burgess warned in early 2020 of the explosive growth of such groups, saying “In suburbs around Australia, small cells regularly meet to salute Nazi flags, inspect weapons, train in

²⁰ “The Base” <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/what-australia-is-doing/terrorist-organisations/listed-terrorist-organisations/the-base>.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Wilson, J (2020), “Prepping for a race war: documents reveal inner workings of neo-Nazi group”, *The Guardian* (25 Jan) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/25/inside-the-base-neo-nazi-terror-group>.

²³ Hitch, G (2021), “Spy boss says ASIO anticipating terrorist attack in the next year from either right-wing or Islamic extremists”, *ABC* (29 April) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-04-29/asio-anticipate-terrorist-attack-right-wing-islamic-within-year/100103546>.

combat and share their hateful ideology.”²⁴ Deputy Director-General Heather Cook also testified that “Extreme right-wing violent extremism occupies approximately between 30 and 40 per cent of ASIO’s current case load in our counterterrorism work — and that is an increase from approximately 10 and 15 per cent prior to 2016.”²⁵ NSW police recorded 31 sightings of the Nazi flag in 2020,²⁶ and vandalism involving swastikas and other Nazi graffiti has occurred across Australia.²⁷

The Australian Government noted the extent of The Base’s violent activities, including paramilitary training camps and the orchestration of vandalism against synagogues in the US, with plans for far worse.²⁸ The group is also listed by the UK and Canada.

The Base and global far-right networks

Mason’s ideology spawned several groups, including the Atomwaffen Division (AWD) and the AWD’s British chapter, the Sonnenkrieg Division (SKD),²⁹ the latter of which is listed in Australia as a terrorist organisation under Division 102 of the *Criminal Code*. AWD has been involved in several murders and planned for many more.

It is difficult to discern whether NRVEs are splintering into multiple groups, whether some are umbrellas for the others, or whether they are all a single network that operates under different aliases across the world to try to avoid listing and law enforcement.

²⁴ Greene, A (2020), “Neo-Nazis among Australia’s most challenging security threats, ASIO boss Mike Burgess warns”, ABC (24 Feb) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-24/asio-director-general-mike-burgess-neo-nazi-threat-rising/11994178>.

²⁵ Greene, A (2020), “Right-wing extremists using Islamic State tactics to recruit, ASIO warns, amid spike in surveillance”, ABC.(22 Sep) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-09-22/right-wing-extremists-asio-islamic-state-tactics/12690002>.

²⁶ Hunter, F (2021), “NSW Labor pushes for ban on swastika as neo-Nazi threat grows on police radar,” *Sydney Morning Herald* (4 Sep) <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/nsw-labor-pushes-for-ban-on-swastika-as-neo-nazi-threat-grows-on-police-radar-20210904-p58os6.html>.

²⁷ Caldwell, F (2021), “Calls to ban the Nazi swastika in Queensland after train vandalism”, *Brisbane Times* (13 May) <https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/politics/queensland/calls-to-ban-the-nazi-swastika-in-queensland-after-train-vandalism-20210513-p57rk6.html>.

²⁸ See note 20.

²⁹ “Sonnenkrieg Division”, *Counter Extremism Project* <https://www.counterextremism.com/supremacy/sonnenkrieg-division>.

What is clear is that many of these so-called groups have the same membership and leadership, often simultaneously. For instance, SKD leader Andrew Dymock and operative Oskar Dunn-Koczorowski were “former” members of the System Resistance Network (SRN), itself a front for the National Action (NA) group in the UK.

NA allegedly expelled them over their “growing interest in Satanism, pedophilia, and rape”,³⁰ although it should be noted that, as with the Nazis themselves, Satanism and other forms of paganism are often ideological components of neo-Nazi groups, not least because Christianity is viewed by some as an offshoot of Judaism. AWD and its SKD affiliate, for instance, draw on the ideology of the neo-Nazi Satanist group Order of Nine Angles (O9A).³¹ AWD was reorganised into the National Socialist Order (NSO) in July 2020.

The Base is no exception to this rule – it shares its membership with AWD/NSO. For instance, Cameron Shea – an AWD leader sentenced in the US along with three other members in 2021 for threatening journalists, primarily Jews and minorities, for exposing AWD antisemitism³² – was also a senior operative in The Base.³³ Another dual-hatted AWD and The Base member, as noted in the Government’s submission, was Richard Tobin, who was charged in 2019 with orchestrating vandalism against synagogues in what he called “Operation Kristallnacht”.³⁴

The Base and other associated extremists are an acute threat to Australia’s Jewish community. Being a neo-Nazi group, antisemitism lies at the core of its worldview, and while thankfully Australia has not seen the mass casualty antisemitic violence either attempted or perpetrated against Jews in the US by NRVE individuals recently, it is not

³⁰“Atomwaffen Division/National Socialist Order”, *Center for International Security and Cooperation* https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/atomwaffen-division#_ftn45.

³¹ “Sonnenkrieg Division” <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/what-australia-is-doing/terrorist-organisations/listed-terrorist-organisations/sonnenkrieg-division>.

³²“Leader of ‘Atomwaffen’ Conspiracy Sentenced to Three Years in Prison for Threatening Journalists and Advocates”, *US Department of Justice* (24 Aug 2021) <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/leader-atomwaffen-conspiracy-sentenced-three-years-prison-threatening-journalists-and>.

³³ See note 25.

³⁴ Wilson, J (2019), “Far right network orchestrated synagogue attacks, FBI says”, *The Guardian* (17 Nov) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/16/far-right-network-orchestrated-synagogue-attacks-fbi-says>.

difficult to imagine the openly antisemitic and conspiratorial vitriol online galvanising an extremist to act here, as well.

In 2020, someone seemingly answered the call of an unnamed white supremacist group and tried to burn down a Jewish assisted-living facility in the US, mentioned by the group for what it called “Jew killing day”.³⁵ The circumstantial evidence suggests the group was The Base.

State sanctuary and Russian support

A vastly underappreciated facet of far-right extremism is that the entire right-wing network to which The Base belongs – including AWD/SKD/NSO – emerged from and is protected, if not supported, by Russia. This sprawling network was spawned by the fascist IronMarch forum, founded by Alisher Mukhitdinov in Russia in 2011. Mukhitdinov and the forum mysteriously disappeared without a trace from the internet in 2017, but the *BBC Russian service* revealed he is in fact still living freely in Moscow, untouched by Russia’s security services.³⁶ One such group to emerge from this forum is Australia’s Antipodean Resistance, now operating under the front group The Lads Society.³⁷

Moreover, The Base’s ostensible leader Nazzaro seems to have founded the group in Russia in 2018, where he has been living ever since.³⁸ Video of Nazzaro in a Putin T-shirt, the fact that he lives openly in an expensive apartment in St Petersburg, and the fact that he was listed as a guest at a Russian Government security exhibition in Moscow³⁹ indicate that The Base – and associated groups birthed directly or indirectly through IronMarch – may in fact

³⁵ Levenson, M (2020), “Man Charged With Trying to Blow Up Jewish Assisted-Living Home”, *New York Times* (16 April) <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/us/massachusetts-bomb-jewish-nursing-home.html>.

³⁶ “How a Moscow man from an Uzbek family started the world’s biggest neo-Nazi forum”, *Meduza* (5 Feb 2020) <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2020/02/04/how-a-moscow-man-from-an-uzbek-family-started-the-world-s-biggest-neo-nazi-forum>.

³⁷ Kelly, C (2020), “Who are the neo-Nazi groups threatening Australia’s security?”, *The New Daily* (26 Feb) <https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/2020/02/26/australia-neo-nazi/>.

³⁸ Wilson, J (2020), “Revealed: the true identity of the leader of an American neo-Nazi terror group”, *The Guardian* (24 Jan) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/23/revealed-the-true-identity-of-the-leader-of-americas-neo-nazi-terror-group?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other.

³⁹ Daniel De Simone, Andrei Soshnikov and Ali Winston (2020), “Neo-Nazi Rinaldo Nazzaro running US militant group The Base from Russia”, *BBC* (24 Jan) <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-51236915>.

be assets of Russian intelligence to be used alongside other such groups to undermine the West.

In April 2020, the US designated the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM) and its leadership as global terrorists over its training of global right-wing insurgents, the first time the US had ever designated foreign white supremacist terrorists.⁴⁰ Whatever its precise relationship with the Kremlin,⁴¹ RIM fights and funds the Kremlin's wars and destabilisation campaigns.⁴²

The group was alleged to have reached out to the American organisers of the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia,⁴³ where a neo-Nazi killed Heather Heyer in a vehicular ramming attack, to invite them to its training courses.

The leader of Denmark's NRVE National Front, Lars Agerbak, was also trained by RIM and eventually moved to Russia. RIM also trained the Nordic Resistance Movement neo-Nazis who conducted a bombing in Sweden in 2017 against a refugee centre.⁴⁴ The Base also has a Swedish branch that committed an arson attack in the country.⁴⁵

Given the transnational reach of these inter-related, Russia-based NRVE groups and the building tensions with Russia over Ukraine, the threat of such groups mounting attacks against Australia on Russia's behalf needs to be factored into the overall risk analysis and listing of these groups.

⁴⁰ "Briefing on the United States Designation of the Russian Imperial Movement and Its Leaders as Global Terrorists", *US State Department* (6 April 2020) <https://2017-2021.state.gov/briefing-with-coordinator-for-counterterrorism-ambassador-nathan-a-sales-on-the-united-states-designation-of-the-russian-imperial-movement-and-its-leaders-as-global-terrorists/index.html>.

⁴¹ Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, Samuel Hodgson and Dr. Colin P. Clarke (2020), "The Russian Imperial Movement (RIM) and its Links to the Transnational White Supremacist Extremist Movement", *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism* (24 April) <https://icct.nl/publication/the-russian-imperial-movement-rim-and-its-links-to-the-transnational-white-supremacist-extremist-movement/>.

⁴² Shekhovtsov, A (2015), "Russian fascist militants give money to Swedish counterparts", *Anton Shekhovtsov's blog* (19 Sept) <https://anton-shekhovtsov.blogspot.com/2015/09/russian-fascist-militants-give-money-to.html>.

⁴³ Gertz, B (2019), "Russian Group Offered Paramilitary Training to U.S. Neo-Nazis", *Washington Free Beacon* (5 April) <https://freebeacon.com/national-security/russian-group-offered-paramilitary-training-to-u-s-neo-nazis/>.

⁴⁴ Carpenter, M (2018), "Russia Is Co-opting Angry Young Men", *The Atlantic* (29 Aug) <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/08/russia-is-co-opting-angry-young-men/568741/>.

⁴⁵ By Zachary Kamel, Mack Lamoureux and Ben Makuch (2020), "'Eco-fascist' Arm of Neo-Nazi Terror Group, The Base, Linked to Swedish Arson", *Vice News* (30 Jan) <https://www.vice.com/en/article/qjdvzx/eco-fascist-arm-of-neo-nazi-terror-group-the-base-linked-to-swedish-arson>.

Activity in Australia

The Base is known to recruit in Australia. As AIJAC has reported, former One Nation candidate Dean Smith, who ran for the federal seat of O'Connor in 2019, was personally interviewed and vetted by Nazzaro with a view to joining the organisation, though he allegedly did not.⁴⁶ Leaked audio of vetting interviews by Nazzaro revealed at least five other Australians were targeted for recruitment. Nazzaro said in 2019 that "We have barely a toehold right now in Australia, we need to change that to a foothold."⁴⁷

But the right-wing network goes beyond The Base. As mentioned earlier, the Antipodean Resistance/The Lads Society came from the same ecosystem as The Base⁴⁸. Its leader, Thomas Sewell, openly supports NA terrorists in the UK like Ben Raymond,⁴⁹ and claims he tried to recruit the notorious neo-Nazi Christchurch shooter Brenton Tarrant.⁵⁰ As with the other NRVEs, Sewell is also associated with the National Socialist Network, of which he is the leader, as well as the United Patriots Front. Sewell was arrested by counterterrorism police in May 2021.⁵¹

Like militaries across the world, Australia also faces the problem of neo-Nazis infiltrating the Australian Defence Force or recruiting veterans, which would add to their capabilities.

⁴⁶Levin, N (2021), "Going to Extremes", *Australia Israel Review* (27 Jan) <https://aijac.org.au/australia-israel-review/going-to-extremes/>.

⁴⁷ Mann, A and Nguyen, K (2021), "The Base tapes", *ABC Background Briefing* (26 March) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-26/the-base-tapes-secret-recordings-australian-recruitment/13255994>.

⁴⁸Nathan, J (2018), "Antipodean Resistance: The Rise and Goals of Australia's New Nazis", *ABC Religion & Ethics* (20 April) <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/antipodean-resistance-the-rise-and-goals-of-australias-new-nazis/10094794>.

⁴⁹"Australian neo-Nazi stand with convicted British terrorist", *AIJAC* (17 Dec 2021) <https://aijac.org.au/fresh-air/australian-neo-nazis-stand-with-convicted-british-terrorist/>.

⁵⁰Begley, P (2019), "Threats from white extremist group that 'tried to recruit Tarrant'", *Sydney Morning Herald* (2 May) <https://www.smh.com.au/national/threats-from-white-extremist-group-that-tried-to-recruit-tarrant-20190501-p51j5w.html>.

⁵¹"Australian neo-Nazi leader Thomas Sewell charged over alleged armed robbery", *ABC* (14 May 2021) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-05-14/neo-nazi-thomas-sewell-arrested-melbourne/100140902>.

Sewell himself is a veteran, as are several other neo-Nazi figures in Australia.⁵² In 2018, images emerged of Australian soldiers flying the Nazi flag in Afghanistan.⁵³

The rapid spread of conspiracy theories during the COVID-19 pandemic is bringing NRVE rhetoric and beliefs into the mainstream of Australian politics, and it is vital that groups like The Base are not able to capitalise on it. Neo-Nazis have infiltrated and, in some cases, reportedly organised some anti-lockdown protests, using them for recruitment. One such figure was arrested for calling on protesters to kill Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews, while the addresses of other politicians were shared by extremists on encrypted messaging apps.⁵⁴ The normalisation of NRVE rhetoric and conspiracies has reportedly increased concerns for the safety of politicians.⁵⁵

Arrests of neo-Nazis planning attacks in Australia occurred in March⁵⁶ and December 2020.⁵⁷ In September 2021, counter-terrorism police arrested a neo-Nazi for attempting to 3D print a gun.⁵⁸

⁵² McKenzie, N and Tozer, J (2021), "Fears of neo-Nazis in military ranks after ex-soldier's passport cancelled", *WA Today* (22 Aug) <https://www.watoday.com.au/national/fears-of-neo-nazis-in-military-ranks-after-ex-soldier-s-passport-cancelled-20210820-p58khk.html>.

⁵³ Oakes, D (2018), "Australian soldiers flew Nazi swastika flag from vehicle in Afghanistan; PM says diggers' actions 'absolutely wrong'", *ABC* (14 June) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-14/photo-shows-nazi-flag-flown-over-australian-army-vehicle/9859618>.

⁵⁴ McKenzie, N and Lucas, C (2021), "Far-right protester charged by counter-terror police amid talk of killing Daniel Andrews", *Sydney Morning Herald* (18 Nov) <https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/far-right-protester-charged-by-counter-terror-police-amid-talk-of-killing-daniel-andrews-20211117-p599qx.html>.

⁵⁵ Gray, L (2021), "Concerns over politicians' safety amid growing 'extreme right' rhetoric", *Nine News* (21 Oct) <https://www.9news.com.au/national/politicians-security-extreme-right-wing-threat-increasing-asio-report/3bd3aa76-d455-4aa6-823b-1654b830c782>.

⁵⁶ "Man charged after allegedly planning rightwing terrorism attack on NSW south coast", *The Guardian* (16 March 2020) <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/mar/16/man-charged-after-allegedly-planning-rightwing-terrorism-attack-on-nsw-south-coast>.

⁵⁷ "NSW Joint Counter Terrorism Team arrests 18-year-old Albury man", *Australian Federal Police* (9 Dec 2020) <https://www.afp.gov.au/news-media/media-releases/nsw-joint-counter-terrorism-team-arrests-18-year-old-albury-man>.

⁵⁸ Hunter, F (2021), "Alleged right-wing extremist charged over blueprint to 3D-print a gun", *Sydney Morning Herald* (13 Sep) <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/alleged-right-wing-extremist-arrested-over-blueprint-to-3d-print-a-gun-20210913-p58r80.html>.

Allied extremists

Unfortunately, because they are accelerationists, NRVE groups often support jihadi terrorists and occasionally members convert to Islam and join groups like Al-Qaeda. This was the case of David Myatt, the Satanist O9A leader and key Combat 18 and National Socialist Movement figure who converted to Islam and became an Al-Qaeda propagandist until renouncing extremism overall later in life.⁵⁹ There is also the 2017 case of Devon Arthurs, a former neo-Nazi convert to Islam who murdered his roommate.⁶⁰ Most disturbingly, a US soldier and neo-Nazi passed classified information to O9A on his unit's movements in Turkey to essentially orchestrate a jihadi attack.⁶¹ This is not a comprehensive list of the phenomenon.⁶²

Islamists also have a tendency to respect Hitler and the Nazis. For instance, there was also a 2019 case in the US involving a police officer arrested for trying to support the Islamic State that turned up his substantial collection of Nazi memorabilia, including a photo of him in a Nazi uniform and of a woman carrying a "God Bless Hitler" sign.⁶³

The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) has recently documented the pervasive support for various jihadist groups, including Hizballah, Hamas and the Taliban, in neo-Nazi channels, particularly during the May conflict between Israel and Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza whose goal is the ultimate destruction of Israel.⁶⁴

⁵⁹Lowles, N (2019), "Far right hate is spiralling out of control – and politicians aren't doing enough to stop it," *Independent* (19 Feb) <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/far-right-extremism-racism-islamophobia-antisemitism-hope-not-hate-politics-report-a8784946.html>.

⁶⁰Wang, A (2017), "A neo-Nazi converted to Islam and killed 2 roommates for 'disrespecting' his faith, police say", *Washington Post* (23 May) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/05/23/a-neo-nazi-converted-to-islam-and-killed-2-roommates-for-disrespecting-his-faith-police-say/>.

⁶¹Ackerman, S and Rawnsley, A (2020), "Army Soldier Plotted 'Jihadi Attack' on His Own Unit With Neo-Nazi Satanists: Feds", *The Daily Beast* (22 June) <https://www.thedailybeast.com/us-army-soldier-plotted-mass-casualty-attack-on-his-own-unit-with-satanic-neo-nazi-group-feds-say>.

⁶² Kutner, M (2020), "The Surprising Convergence Between Neo-Nazis and Jihadis", *Just Security* (17 July) <https://www.justsecurity.org/71470/the-surprising-convergence-between-neo-nazis-and-jihadis/>.

⁶³ "Ex-police officer again gets 15 years on terror conviction", *Associated Press* (22 June 2019) <https://www.whsv.com/content/news/Ex-police-officer-to-be-resentenced-on-terrorism-charge-511627551.html>.

⁶⁴ Stalinsky, S (2022), "Neo-Nazis Look To Forge Bromance With Jihadis", *MEMRI* (11 Jan) <https://www.memri.org/reports/neo-nazis-look-forge-bromance-jihadis>.

Indeed, one of the strongest areas of overlap between jihadists and neo-Nazis is antisemitism. For instance, after the Jan. 15 hostage taking at a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas by a British Islamist, many white supremacists either lauded the attacks or used them to advance various antisemitic conspiracy theories, some even mocking the hostage taker for not killing the Jews.⁶⁵

NRVE groups and individuals thus pose not only their own danger, but could easily support or even become jihadists themselves.

⁶⁵ "Extremists Respond to Colleyville Hostage Crisis with Antisemitism, Islamophobia", *Anti-Defamation League* (16 Jan 2022) <https://www.adl.org/blog/extremists-respond-to-colleyville-hostage-crisis-with-antisemitism-islamophobia>.

Conclusion

AIJAC supports the Australian Government's decision to list The Base and Hizballah under the *Criminal Code*.

Listing The Base brings Australia into step with its fellow 'Five Eyes' allies Canada and the UK. Australia should encourage the US to move beyond RIM to designate these ever-shifting groups, beginning with The Base and Sonnenkrieg Division and their offshoots and splinters.

AIJAC further recommends that the Australian Government explore The Base's interrelationship with other local and global NRVE groups and consider expanding the listing to the entire NRVE ecosystem detailed in this submission.

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