

September 2024

Elections Dashboard Analysis

The National Task Force on Election Crises' Elections Dashboard is a visualization that collates news stories about past and present election-related developments, some of which could become or lay the foundation for actual election crises. Every month, the Task Force shares an analysis of prominent developments, comparing the frequency and severity of developments from previous months and highlighting the top stories to watch going forward.

HOW DEVELOPMENTS ARE CLASSIFIED

Levels

- 3: High Concern
- 2: Moderate Concern
- 1: Low Concern
- 0: No Concern

Categories

Administration: Incidents that delay or disrupt normal voting and tabulation processes and best practices

Mis/Disinformation: False information about elections spread either unintentionally (mis) or intentionally (dis)

Violence: Violence and intimidation aimed at voters, election administrators, judges, or political candidates

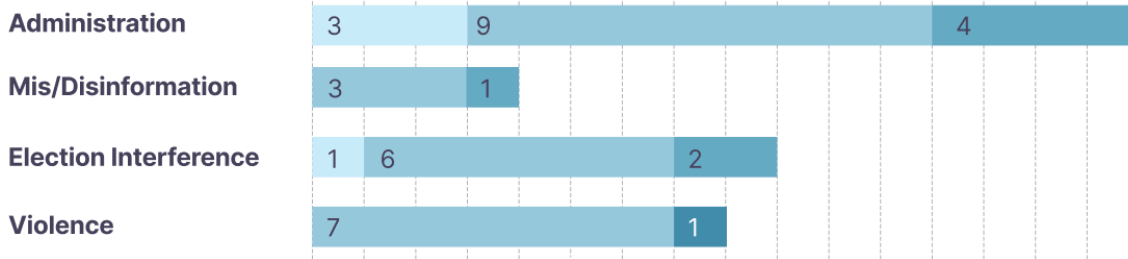
Interference: Bad faith efforts to manipulate an election and ultimately prevent the true election winner from taking office

ELECTIONS DASHBOARD DEVELOPMENTS

August 9 through September 9, 2024

Number of new developments this month by category and level of concern.

■ No Concern ■ Low Concern ■ Moderate Concern ■ High Concern



WHICH DEVELOPMENT TYPE WAS MOST PROMINENT LAST MONTH?

Election Administration

Over the past month, a plurality of the developments that we observed pertained to Election Administration. While this is a continuation of last month's trends, broadly speaking, we also observed a noteworthy uptick in Violence.

- **Level 1 - [In Arizona, primary election certification requires pressure](#)**

County certification of election results is not an optional process, and officials are obligated to certify results regardless of whether or not they have personal or political concerns about them. ([For more information on this topic, review this resource from Protect Democracy.](#))

However, following Arizona's primary election in August, a Pinal County official expressed that he doubted the integrity of the results, and while he did vote to certify them, did so "under duress." This comes less than two years after the 2022 midterms when officials in Cochise County canvassed election results only after being ordered to do so by a judge. While the results were certified in both cases, continued implications that election officials' personal or political objections to the results potentially gives them the power to reject those election results require continued rebuttal.

- **Level 1 - [Texas governor announces registration removals](#)**

In late August, Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced that over 1 million voters' names had been removed from Texas voter rolls. The vast majority of purged names belong to voters

who've either died or are on the "[suspense list](#)." Both groups of voters are systematically removed in all states according to processes laid out in the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA).

Abbott also [claimed](#) to identify almost 2,000 voter records of noncitizens with a history of voting. The accuracy of that claim is unclear, and further investigation is needed. As background, in 2019 the state of Texas falsely claimed that 95,000 non-citizens were registered. Large numbers of these records actually ended up belonging to naturalized citizens, or were false positive matches, resulting in a [settlement](#). Additionally, Abbott announced "ongoing" list maintenance activities—a claim that requires monitoring, as any systematic list maintenance inside the 90-day pre-election "quiet period" window is prohibited by the NVRA.

- **Level 1 - [Michigan's State Secretary of State is the victim of a "swatting" attack](#)**

In mid-August, Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson was the target of two "swatting" attacks—hoax phone calls made to law enforcement with the intent of provoking an armed response that will frighten, intimidate, and/or otherwise traumatize the person being targeted. Though Secretary Benson was not injured, these two attempted swattings are clear attempts to harm or intimidate her. Political violence like swatting could potentially inhibit the state's ability to effectively administer the 2024 election and should be mitigated to the extent possible. Future swatting attacks closer to the election would raise additional concerns.

HAVE ANY SEVERE DEVELOPMENTS OCCURRED IN THE LAST MONTH?

No severe developments, but some very concerning trends

We categorized the vast majority of this month's developments as Level 1—meaning they do not currently constitute a threat to free and fair elections, but may lead to more severe developments in the future and thus require continued monitoring. We also observed a small number of Level 2 developments, though nowhere near as many as Level 1.

- **Level 2 - [Georgia officials face misinformation and threats](#)**

In Georgia, election officials report that they have been overwhelmed by the sheer volume of threats and misinformation they face. They report that responding to misinformation and continuing to focus on their work despite threats of violence is becoming an increasingly insurmountable task and express concerns that AI may give agitators new tools to disrupt their work or spread disinformation with greater ease. The [New York Times report](#) on this

subject paints a troubling picture of the headwinds that elections officials are currently facing in this key swing state, with weeks and weeks to go.

- **Level 1 - [Arizona man charged for threatening officials](#)**

In late August, a Colorado man named Teak Brockbank was arrested for making a series of detailed online posts threatening the lives of multiple Colorado and Arizona officials. Brockbank faces up to five years in prison if convicted.

While the online threats in question are over two years old, instances of explicit threats made on social media should nevertheless be monitored to ensure that election officials are able to safely and effectively administer the 2024 election.

- **Level 1 - [Arizona man arrested for threatening President Trump](#)**

In August, law enforcement officials arrested Ronald Lee Syvrud, 66, for allegedly making a series of threats against former President Donald Trump. Syvrud was arrested in Arizona, where there had been an outstanding warrant for his arrest. There is also an outstanding warrant in Wisconsin.

President Trump was the target of an assassination attempt at a rally earlier this year, and a potential assassination attempt at his Florida golf course on September 15, which was thwarted by officials. Threats against the former president's life or any other elected officials are unacceptable; they constitute a threat to our elections and cannot be tolerated in a thriving democracy.

HOW DO THE FREQUENCY AND SEVERITY OF DEVELOPMENTS COMPARE TO PAST MONTHS?

Developments take varied forms heading into the fall stretch

Compared to the previous month, this month saw significantly more Level 1 developments, as well as a more even distribution across categories. Whereas half of developments last month pertained to Election Administration, only a plurality of developments fell into that category this month. Misinformation and Disinformation developments held steady, and we observed a slight uptick in Violence.

WHAT ARE THE TOP STORIES FROM LAST MONTH TO WATCH GOING FORWARD?

Violence and threats of violence continue to concern

This month's analysis contained multiple threats against election officials and candidates. The FBI is investigating, "what appears to be an attempted assassination of former President Trump," just two months after the first assassination attempt that killed an attendee at one of the former president's rallies. In Arizona, Michigan, and Georgia, clear and explicit efforts have been made to intimidate election officials, including online threats and a "swatting" incident that targeted the Michigan Secretary of State. Several counties in Georgia have begun to take the precautionary step of issuing "panic buttons" to election workers – an increasingly common recommendation.

There is no place for political violence in our democracy. This increasing trend of threats of violence and physical harm as part of the election process must be condemned.

For years now, election officials and law enforcement have been working tirelessly to ensure that voters have a safe and positive voting experience throughout this election season. They have action plans and procedures in place to keep voters safe, ballots secure, and election workers protected. As the election approaches, those plans are being further strengthened by months of testing and refining procedures and coordination between law enforcement, election officials, and community leaders in preparation for this moment.

This document is published by the National Task Force on Election Crises, a cross-partisan group of experts that helps civil society and decision-makers prevent, prepare for, and mitigate a range of election crises. You can learn more at electiontaskforce.org.