June 4, 2026

Letter to Portland City Council
Re: Concerns Regarding the 2026 Portland Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) Annual Report

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

We write regarding the 2026 Portland Police Bureau Criminal Intelligence Unit Annual Report on the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), submitted January 20, 2026. While the report reflects limited formal involvement in 2025, it highlights significant gaps in oversight and accountability under the current framework.

Council should consider—if not disengaging from the JTTF altogether—revising the policy so that PPB participation occurs only where there is documented probable cause of a specific criminal offense involving terrorism or a clearly imminent threat to life. At the same time, **the reporting framework must be strengthened to ensure meaningful oversight.** At a minimum, future reports should include: how each investigation originated; the specific facts establishing the criminal predicate under Oregon law; investigative steps taken and outcomes; disclosure of informal contacts and consultations; confirmation that protected political, religious, or associational activity was not used as a basis for investigation; and clarification of any information sharing through other agencies or intelligence systems. **Reports should remain focused on factual, objective descriptions of PPB activities and should not include federal public-safety messaging or generalized language that encourages suspicion of community members.**

If these reforms cannot be implemented, Council should strongly consider whether continued participation in the JTTF remains consistent with the purpose of the 2019 resolution. Given evolving federal policies and investigative priorities, it may be increasingly difficult to reconcile federal counterterrorism frameworks with Oregon law and Portland's commitments to civil liberties and community trust.

The report indicates that in 2025 there was one request from the FBI for temporary PPB participation, one case referred from the FBI to PPB, and two cases referred from PPB to the FBI, along with limited follow-up on prior cases. While this relatively low level of formal involvement is encouraging, the report continues to provide **minimal factual detail**, making it difficult for Council or the public to determine whether these investigations fall within the narrow limits contemplated by the 2019 resolution.

For example, the report does not explain how the cases came to the attention of the FBI or PPB, what specific facts established the criminal nexus required under Oregon law, what investigative steps were taken, or why certain cases were ultimately closed or suspended. Without such information, Council cannot meaningfully determine whether participation was appropriate or consistent with Oregon's restrictions on intelligence gathering.

This lack of detail reflects a broader structural issue. The current standard—"reasonable grounds" to suspect criminal conduct—provides insufficient protection against investigations rooted in ideology, association, or protected political activity. A documented probable-cause threshold would both protect civil liberties and allow future reports to demonstrate clearly why each case met that standard.

Additional oversight gaps remain. The report tracks only formal referrals and temporary assignments but does not disclose how often PPB officers engage in **informal consultations with federal agencies**, exchange information outside formal cases, or participate in discussions that never result in an official investigation. Without reporting on these interactions, Council cannot assess whether intelligence sharing may be occurring in ways that circumvent the safeguards established in the resolution or Oregon law.

A related concern involves **information sharing through the Oregon TITAN Fusion Center or similar intelligence systems**. Because these systems allow federal partners—including the FBI—to access locally generated data, information may reach federal authorities even when no formal JTTF referral occurs. For example, it is unclear whether routine criminal-justice information such as inmate booking data, identity information, addresses, or immigration-related indicators may be accessible through these systems. Clarification is necessary to ensure that such information sharing does not undermine Oregon's restrictions on intelligence gathering or its limitations on the use of local resources for federal immigration enforcement.

The report also continues to include **federal counterterrorism messaging that is inappropriate in an oversight document**. Statements that the public is the "first line of defense" and references to "see something, say something" campaigns encourage reporting of vague "suspicious activity" and risk reinforcing surveillance based on bias or association rather than criminal conduct. This language has been criticized in prior reports and should not appear in a document intended to provide neutral, fact-based oversight.

These concerns are heightened by the broader national environment, in which federal enforcement actions have increasingly targeted immigrants, religious minorities, and political movements. Public trust in local law enforcement is undermined when local agencies appear to participate in federal investigative structures without clear safeguards.

Recent events in Portland underscore these risks. Following a January 2026 immigration enforcement operation in which federal agents shot and wounded two individuals, protests intensified at the ICE facility. Federal officers subsequently deployed tear gas and projectile munitions against demonstrators, and a federal judge imposed restrictions on the use of such force against individuals who posed no imminent threat. These events demonstrate the importance of ensuring that Portland's participation in federal counterterrorism structures does not entangle the City in actions that undermine civil liberties or chill lawful protest.

The report further raises concerns about **oversight itself**. It states that a CIU sergeant maintains a security clearance for "full oversight," yet does not explain the level of that

clearance, what information it permits access to, or whether elected officials or civilian oversight bodies have comparable access. If oversight is effectively limited to a single cleared officer within PPB, it is difficult to see how meaningful civilian oversight can occur.

These concerns are compounded by the reality that local officers participating in federal task force investigations may operate under legal frameworks and investigative practices that differ significantly from Oregon law and local policing standards. When Portland officers are embedded in such environments—particularly where federal practices may be aggressive or legally contested—the City faces serious questions regarding accountability, liability, and ethical obligations.

We appreciate the Council's attention to this issue and its continued commitment to ensuring that Portland's public-safety policies reflect both effective policing and the protection of civil liberties.

Respectfully,

Jewish Palestinian Alliance of Oregon
ACLU of Oregon
League of Women Voters of Portland
Portland Copwatch/Peace and Justice Works
Islamic Society of Greater Portland
Brandon Mayfield, survivor of improper FBI spying
National Lawyers Guild Portland
Japanese American Citizens League
Portland Harbor Community Coalition
Portland Metro People's Coalition
Albina Ministerial Alliance for Justice and Police Reform