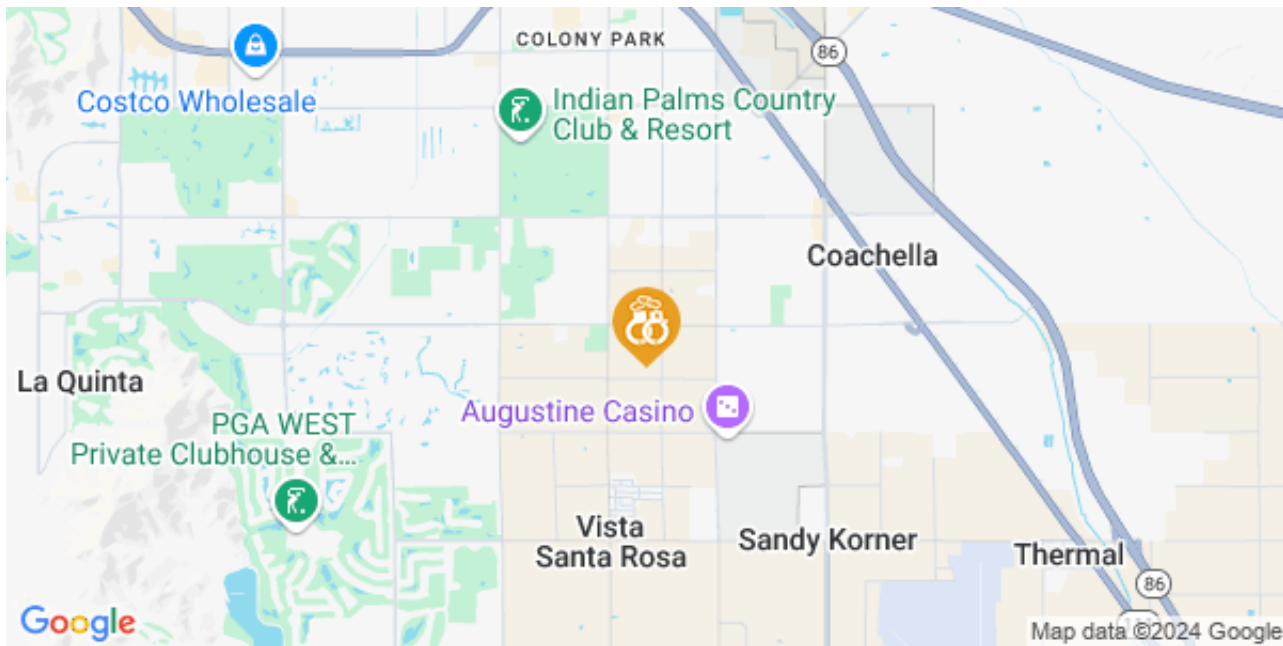




Crime



14

OCT
10:59 UTC

USA Alert: Suspect arrested for illegal weapons possession at Trump rally in Coachella, CA on October 12; unlikely to have posed threat, arrest shows enhanced security preparedness

Current Situation

- On October 12, an individual was arrested for illegally possessing weapons while trying to enter former President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump’s rally in Coachella, CA.
- Vem Miller, a resident of Las Vegas, NV, was reportedly carrying a shotgun, loaded handgun, and a high-capacity magazine in his vehicle. Miller was arrested approximately half a mile from the rally site at a second level of security after he had been allowed through the outer ring of security by presenting fake credentials. Miller was released on bail in the late night hours (local time) of October 12.
- Following the arrest, Riverside County Sheriff, the law enforcement official in charge of the arrest, said that he believed his department “prevented another assassination attempt”. However, as per October 13 reports, a federal law enforcement official said there is no indication that there was an attempt to assassinate Trump. The Department of Justice reported on October 13 that a federal investigation into the incident is ongoing.
- Reports indicate that Vem Miller is a registered Republican, who ran for State Assembly in Nevada in 2022 but lost his primary. As per reports citing the Sheriff, Miller is suspected of being a part of the Sovereign Citizens (SovCit) anti-government movement, which is a loosely organized extremist network with roots in far-right views and militia activity. SovCit followers claim to not be subject to

any government laws unless consented. Miller was driving an unregistered vehicle with a fake, “homemade” license plate, a practice used by SovCit followers.

- In a statement to a local media outlet on October 13, Miller rejected the accusation of planning an assassination while claiming that he is a “staunch Trump supporter”. He also claimed that he was invited personally to Trump’s Coachella Valley rally by the head of Clark County’s Republican Party and that he wore a Trump t-shirt and a MAGA hat, alluding to Trump’s Make America Great Again slogan, while entering the venue.

Source: [Riverside Sheriff](#)

Assessments & Forecast

1. While the investigation is ongoing, the federal authorities’ statements and preliminary indications of Miller being a Trump supporter suggests that he is unlikely to have intended to carry out an attack targeting either Trump or other attendees at the rally. Miller’s possession of firearms and fake IDs, including multiple passports, and driving an unregistered vehicle may be explained by his alleged membership of SovCit. Militia groups and their sympathizers in the country are known for showing up armed at public gatherings, including political rallies, as a symbolic demonstration of exercising the Second Amendment. This is reflected in Miller’s claim that he possessed the weapons for his own safety and due to not knowing the difference between gun laws in California and his resident state of Nevada, where open carry of handguns and shotguns is legal.
2. Furthermore, the fact that the suspect would have had to make it past a Secret Service pedestrian checkpoint to enter the venue, in addition to the second level of security at which his vehicle was stopped, suggests that the risk of a successful attack, even if intended, was low. To this end, the arrest underscores enhanced security preparedness at political rallies led by high-profile politicians during the ongoing electoral period given the credible risk of politically motivated security incidents. This particularly follows the two attempted assassination attempts against Trump, on [July 13 in Butler, PA](#) and on [September 15 in West Palm Beach, FL](#).
3. In light of increased security concerns, heightened law enforcement details at campaign rallies, government buildings, and more vigilant online monitoring for politically motivated threats have been employed compared to the previous electoral cycles. **FORECAST:** Such measures are expected to limit the risk of a successful attack targeting high-profile politicians and campaign events. Nonetheless, with polarization and rhetoric increasing across the political spectrum over different issues, the risk of politically motivated lone actor shootings at planned campaign rallies, voting centers, or government buildings is relatively high in the coming weeks. Additional measures to bolster the security of politicians and election workers can be expected in the coming weeks. Increased law enforcement checks are likely to affect mobility around campaign rally locations and key government buildings, especially those slated to host high-profile politicians.

Recommendations

1. Those operating or residing in the USA on October 14 and the coming weeks are advised to maintain heightened vigilance near political rallies and government buildings due to the potential for politically-motivated attacks during the electoral period.
2. It is advised to adhere to possibly stricter law enforcement protocols near political rallies and government buildings.
3. If alerted to suspicious activity inform authorities immediately.
4. If a potential shooting or similar incident manifests, it is advised to leave the area immediately, if possible, or take shelter at a secure location.