

News**CBC Meets with FBI Director Over 'Black Identity Extremists' Report**

CBC Members Met with FBI Director Christopher Wray about the FBI's Controversial "Black Identity Extremists" Report. This Is What They Learned.

By Stacy M. Brown
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FBI Director Christopher A. Wray failed to explain why the agency he leads changed the name of a domestic terrorism designation from "Black Separatist Extremist" to "Black Identity Extremist," during a recent meeting with a group of Congressional Black Caucus members about a leaked FBI document.

Wray also refused to acknowledge that Black activists, including Black Lives Matter organizers, are being monitored by the FBI, according to CBC members present at the meeting.

The leaked FBI document, titled "Black Identity Extremists Likely Motivated to Target Law Enforcement Officers," sparked a wave of controversy and sharp criticism of the FBI.

At least one CBC member called the leaked document "COINTELPRO 2.0," while another said that the report "calls for open season on Black activists." The document was shared widely with local law enforcement agencies across the country.

According to Newsweek, following the "fatal attacks on police officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 2016, the bureau expressed concerns about 'the threat of copycat attacks against law enforcement' at the Republican and Democratic national conventions."

Newsweek also reported that other documents showed that "the FBI has monitored Black Lives Matter protesters."

Those documents were released, because of a lawsuit to expose the surveillance filed by the Center for Constitutional Rights and the civil rights group Color of Change.

On Wednesday, November 29, Congressional Black Caucus Chair Cedric Richmond (D-La.) and 2nd Vice Chair Karen Bass (D-Calif.), provided an overview of their meeting with Wray in a teleconference with National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) President Dr. Benjamin F. Cha-

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vis; NNPA National Chairman Dorothy Leavell; and a group of Black publishers, editors and reporters.

CBC members, who are also members of the House Committee on Homeland Security, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and the House Committee on the Judiciary, were present at the meeting.

"Listening to [Wray], especially considering meetings and discussions we've had with Attorney General [Jeff] Sessions, he appeared to be a

breath of fresh air," Bass said.

According to Bass, Wray said the "Black Identity Extremists" report was completed prior to his taking the post, but he acknowledged that he "owns the document" now.

Wray also said that no one would be investigated or targeted, unless they met three points of criteria: there had to be credible evidence of federal crimes; a credible threat of force or violence; and both of those points had to exist in furtherance of a social or political goal.

Bass said the FBI uses that criteria to categorize people as domestic terrorists and, according to the leaked document, "Black Identity Extremists" fall into the category of domestic terrorism.

Wray also admitted that the policy wasn't new, the name simply changed, Bass said.

"They used to call it 'Black Separatist Extremists' and they changed it to 'Black Identity Extremists,'" said Bass. "[Wray] didn't have a lot of rationale for why that change took place, except for the fact that the people that fall under the category 'Black Identity Extremist' don't seem to be separatists in today's world."

CBC members raised major concerns about the report, one of which was how FBI even crafted the methodology to come up with the category of "Black Identity Extremists."

"[Wray] essentially said that they used 'open source' documents, which means news reports," said Bass. "Lord knows what that means."

Bass said that, based on what



FBI DIRECTOR WRAY FBI Director Christopher Wray denied that his agency is investigating the Black Lives Matter movement. In this photo, Wray speaks at the Intelligence and National Security Alliance Summit in Washington, D.C on September 7, 2017.

she heard from Wray, the methodology seemed "flimsy."

"When we raised our concerns that a new generation of Black activists were being targeted [including the Black Lives Matter movement] for surveillance and harassment, [Wray] said repeatedly that there was no investigation of the Black Lives Matter movement," said Bass.

Bass and the other CBC members let Wray know that they were "completely aware" that some activists in their communities were experiencing surveillance and harassment, even though they didn't meet the requirements that Wray described that would lead to an investigation.

The CBC members asked the FBI to retract the document and issue a new message to local law enforcement agencies.

"One of the problems with this document is that it has been widely distributed to law enforcement agencies around the country," said Bass. "Many of us

referenced either our own personal experiences or experiences we were aware of during the 'COINTELPRO' years. when if you send a document like this out to local law enforcement, in many of our opinions, you can declare open season on Black activists, because, then local law enforcement agencies can use the document as justification for doing whatever they want to do."

COINTELPRO, or the "Counter Intelligence Program" of the FBI, was designed in part to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of the Black nationalists," during the 1950s and 1970s.

Writing for the Huffington Post, G. Flint Taylor, a founding partner of the People's Law Office in Chicago, said that hundreds of documents were uncovered during a court case in 1976 that revealed that the FBI also plotted to destroy a children's breakfast program

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to usher in true democracy.

"The country belongs to the people. The soldiers won't do nothing if the people revolt. They will just stand by," Mapfumo said in the interview in his small apartment.

Mapfumo, who drives a Dodge minivan in Eugene, still chafes at the government's confiscation of several of his BMWs in Harare years ago, which he labeled as government harassment.

"The reason was because I was singing against the ruling party, the government and the corruption that was going on," he said.

A friend was later told he could collect the cars for Mapfumo, but they were gone when he went to get them.

"They'd been sold by a corrupt policeman," Mapfumo said.

Mapfumo believes Zimbabwe needs young leaders and said he admires Nelson Chamisa of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change party. But Mapfumo ruled out performing in support of him or any other politician.

Mapfumo plans to keep up his criticism in a new album he's working on that includes a song he wrote shortly before Mugabe resigned. He sang part of it during the interview.

"Rise up Zimbabwe, wake up Zimbabwe, open your eyes," Mapfumo sang in a deep voice.

"It's all about fighting against corruption, fighting against injustice, bad rule of law," he said with a smile.

AP journalist Farai Mutsaka contributed to this report from Harare, Zimbabwe.