According to the FBI’s Hate Crimes Statistics (HCS) database, the total number of hate crimes increased in 2015, 2016 and 2017. In 2017 alone, hate crimes increased by 17 percent. The recent resurgence of right-wing extremist groups tracks closely with this disturbing rise in hate crimes and violent attacks.

From the death of Heather Heyer in Charlottesville to deadly attacks in houses of worship at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, and the Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, white supremacist ideologies are behind a number of devastating high-profile attacks.

**HATE CRIMES - INCLUDING DEADLY ATTACKS - ARE INCREASING**

- After a massive spike following the 9/11 attacks, hate crimes fell until 2014 but are rising once again.¹
- The 17-percent increase in reported hate crimes in 2017 follows a 5-percent increase in 2016 (7,175 hate crimes in 2017 - 1,154 more than in 2016).
- Anti-semitic hate crimes increased by 37 percent in 2017.
- Anti-Latinx crimes jumped by 24 percent in 2017 amid an increase in anti-immigrant rhetoric.
- From 2014 to 2016, anti-Muslim hate crimes increased by a shocking 99 percent.
- Disability-related hate crimes jumped 66 percent in 2017.
- Hate crimes based on sexual orientation grew by 6 percent from 2015 to 2017 after declining for several years.
- Hate crimes data based on gender or gender identity were not published prior to 2014, but have risen steadily in recent years. This data bolsters community concerns, particularly around the high rate of murders of black trans women.
HATE CRIME REPORTING IS INCONSISTENT AND INADEQUATE


The effectiveness of the FBI's data collection is limited because the FBI does not require mandatory reporting by local law enforcement agencies. Often, those local agencies fail to accurately report or even collect hate crimes data. In fact, 87 percent of all participating police agencies reported zero hate crimes to the FBI in 2017. More than 1,000 agencies failed to report any data on hate crimes to the FBI. In addition, local and state hate crime laws are a patchwork of definitions that do not always match the federal definition. The result is significant undercounting of hate crimes. From 2011 to 2015, the FBI tally averaged 5,855 hate crimes a year. However, the BJS survey of hate crimes documented 236,000 incidents during this same time, a difference of several orders of magnitude.

More than half of all hate crimes victims do not report the crimes against them (54 percent from 2011 to 2015). This is increasingly true of members of immigrant communities who may not feel safe reporting incidents to members of law enforcement. All told, this indicates that the total number of hate crimes is significantly undercounted. In fact, the murders of Heather Heyer and Khalil Jabara, some of the most widely reported hate crimes in recent memory, were not counted as hate crimes. Without mandatory reporting and a nationwide, standardized definition of hate crimes, the existing data collection mechanisms will continue to profoundly undercount the prevalence of hate crimes.

RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM IS A MAJOR DRIVER OF HATE-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE U.S.

The Southern Poverty Law Center noted a record 1020 hate groups in the U.S. in 2018, the vast majority of which espouse white nationalist views. Of the hate crimes reported in 2017, more than half (50.7 percent) of the perpetrators were white, although there is no way to definitively count how many were motivated by white supremacy or white nationalist ideas.
The Anti-Defamation League found that in 2018, of the 50 extremist-related murders committed in 2018, the vast majority were by far-right extremists with 78 percent perpetrated by white supremacists. The ADL also hosts a database mapping incidents of hate crimes committed since 2016. An analysis of the database found a significant increase in hate crimes in counties that hosted rallies for President Trump in 2016. A separate analysis of the FBI HCS data drew similar conclusions. This data suggests a strong correlation between hateful political rhetoric and a spike in hate crimes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Hate Magnified, a report from the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights analyzed 4,000 powerful stories of hate crimes and found that 84 percent of Americans perceive that hate crime is on the rise. The report ends with a set of recommendations that could significantly blunt the impact of white nationalism, including mandatory reporting of hate crimes, increased funding for data collection, public education, and the condemnation of hate speech and acts by political and public figures.

REFERENCES

[1] CPC Center aggregation of FBI HCS data from 1997-2017, available at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Z4ONiikJENYy7d2dj9usjTv1tUYbYA9TghQqFFIWE/edit?usp=sharing
[4] Ibid.