

FBI report says U.S. hate crimes increased nearly 12 percent in 2021



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Washington, March 15 (RHC)-- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the domestic United States intelligence agency, has found that hate crimes rose nearly 12 percent from 2020 to 2021, driven primarily by crimes based on race and ethnicity.

FBI data released in Washington showed hate crimes had increased from 8,120 in 2020 to 9,065 in 2021, an 11.6 percent uptick. Nearly 65 percent of victims were targeted for their race, ethnicity or ancestry. Another 15.9 percent of hate crimes were based on sexual orientation, and 14.1 percent were for religious bias.

"Of the 8,327 hate crime offenses classified as crimes against persons in the updated 2021 dataset, 43.2 percent were intimidation, 35.5 percent were simple assault, and 20.1 percent were aggravated assault," the agency said in a news release.

The report was released as concerns grow over violence against minority communities by white supremacists and other hate groups. According to the Reuters news agency, the top reported hate crime categories were anti-Black, anti-white, anti-gay male, anti-Jewish and anti-Asian.

The FBI report also represents the first time the FBI has been able to report confidently on hate crime trends since the agency transitioned to a new method of data collection. Crime data released by the FBI in October included substantial gaps, as slightly more than half of US law enforcement agencies reported data for all of 2021. The latest report incorporates data from cities that had not yet made the change to the new reporting format, filling in some of those gaps.

In 2021, U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland offered states and municipalities additional resources for the task of tracking and looking into hate crimes. "Hate crimes and the devastation they cause communities have no place in this country," Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta said, according to Reuters. "The Justice Department is committed to every tool and resource at our disposal to combat bias-motivated violence in all its forms."

Experts say hate crimes go beyond individual acts of violence. They can have a widespread, chilling impact on the larger communities targeted. The American Psychological Association has linked hate crimes to widespread "psychological distress and lower self-esteem" among groups linked to victims.

"Hate crimes send messages to members of the victim's group that they are unwelcome and unsafe in the community, victimizing the entire group and decreasing feelings of safety and security," the association said.

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