

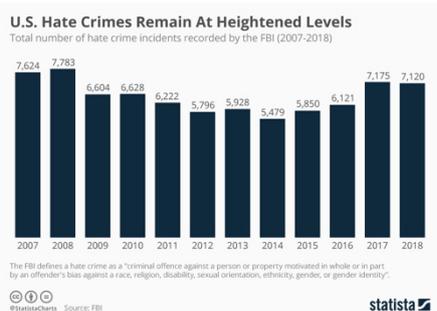
# Tackling the Issue of Hate Crime in North America

Forum: General Assembly

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## Introduction

The terminology hate crime is defined as “criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender’s bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity”. Hate crimes include violent actions, and usually, the targets are groups rather than individuals. Though United Nations (UN) endeavored to mobilize the world against hatred through wide-ranging actions to protect human rights and enhance the rule of law, countries around the globe continue to encounter this challenge related with hate crimes, reported that on average, there are about 191,000 hate crime incidents each year.



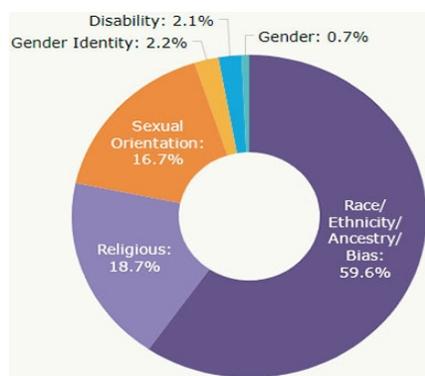
U.S. Hate Crimes Incidents from 2007-2018

However, among all the places with hate crime, North America—the United States, Canada, and Mexico—necessitates an exceptional attention. In 2018, the United States, commonly referred to as the “melting pot” of diversity in race, religion, and gender, experienced 5,155 reported instances of hate crime that resulted 7,615 victims of persecution. While numerous Federal legislations were approved in the United States in attempt to reduce the threat of the hate crimes, U.S. hate crimes incidents remain at heightened levels since 2007 with a rising trend of violence. Likewise, in Canada, a multicultural state, there was a significant increase in hate crimes since 2017. Throughout the increase, non-violent hate crimes in 2018 decreased to 57% from 63% in 2017.

## Background

In June 1998, James Byrd, Jr., an African American man living in Texas, was kidnapped, beat, tied, murdered, and was dumped in front of an African American church by three malicious white supremacists. While the event has upset many U.S. citizens, the recent death of George Floyd in the U.S due to racial injustice allowed the recollection of this memory.

Accounting data regarding hate crimes in North America, analysts from FBI were able to observe that in the United States, there were 4,216 reported victims of race, ethnicity, and ancestry motivated hate crimes in 2015, of

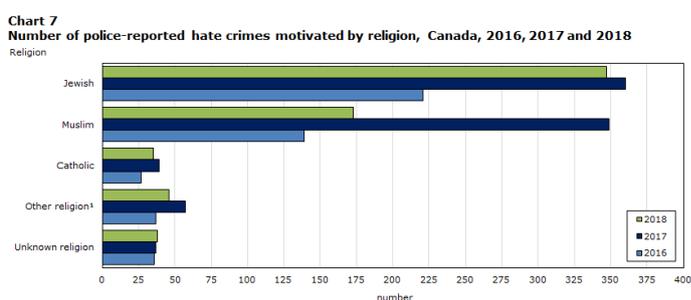


U.S. 2018 Hate Crimes Victims by Categories

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which 52.2 percent were committed by offenders of anti-Black or African-American bias. Moreover, in Canada, the metropolitan areas with numerous incidents of hate crimes also targeted on the Black (31%) and Jewish populations (26%) according to data from statistics of Canada.

The possible contributing factors that caused the high number of incidents for the category can be based on the diversity of countries as North America countries experienced colonization, immigration, and emigration. These experiences have likely triggered conflicts that arose from divergence between political, economic, or structural views, and caused segregation which relates to the hate crime incidents. Moreover, according to a survey conducted in mass shooting at two mosques in New Zealand city of Christchurch, 39% of American believe President Donald Trump support White nationalism movement, and therefore, the situation in United States has worsened. The FBI reported, “Twice as many crimes were reported in New York City after the election than in same period in 2015.”



1. Includes motivations based upon religions not otherwise stated (e.g., Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist).  
 Note: Information in this chart reflects data reported by police services covering 99.95% of the population of Canada.  
 Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

*Canada Reported Hate Crimes by Religion*

escape anti-Semitism.

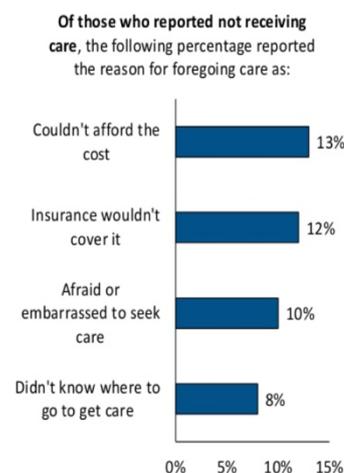
The potential explanation for sexual orientation bias regarding issue of LGBTQ+ with relatively high hate crimes rates can be that the prominent religions in North America are Roman Catholicism and Christianity. People believing in such religions tended to have negative stance towards the topic of LGBTQ and this would have increased the hate crime incidents in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

In addition, the religious bias is also one of the most influential factors for the hate crimes in North America. The religion that experienced the most hate crimes incidents in North America was Jewish. Jews have confronted persecution and discrimination that were accomplished through hate crimes for centuries even after they fled to other countries such as the U.S. to

## Problems Raised

### Health Crisis

The impact of hate crimes on individual health and community health necessitates attention. The survivors of the hate crimes tend to have stronger psychological distress compared to the survivors of other violent crimes. To be specific, survivors of hate crimes struggle with anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with fear, hopelessness, and even anger. Moreover, the community also face severe damages. For instance, with more extensive history of segregation, Black communities face a 9.1 percent rate of PTSD, which is 3 percent higher than the rate for whites. This supports that black people, who experienced incidents like hate crimes have higher rate of PTSD. In addition, a 2014 study



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in Boston found that youths with LGBTQ-related hate crimes were more likely to experience “suicidal ideation”. However, victims are often not care with this mental issue, and 13 percent cannot simply afford the cost. This highlights the importance of support for victims of the hate crimes.

### *Relationship*

According to the research carried out by Kusminder Chahal and Louis Julienne (1999), it was revealed that the victims of hate crimes often have change in relationship with families, and that the individuals feel sense of social isolation as their friends and relatives were less likely to visit. With the damage and change in relationship, it is likely that the victims will not be communicate, and fully express emotions, which will eventually lead to health crisis. For instance, the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention stated that social isolation the isolation will significantly increase the risk of premature death from variety of causes, and that loneliness is associated with high rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide.

## International Action

By the end of 20th century, most U.S. federal government passed laws mandating additional penalties for bias-motivated crimes. In addition, other Western countries implemented laws to curb the hate crimes. For example, in Australia, they outlawed words and images that incite hatred toward particular racial, ethnic, and religious groups at the federal, state, and territory level. Moreover, in Germany, the government forbad public incitement and instigation of racial hatred, including the distribution of Nazi propaganda or literature liable to corrupt of the youth. In North America particular, Canada has passed laws designed to curb violence directed at minority, and in 2009, the U.S. president Barack Obama signed into law-The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009. Though majority of non-Western countries don't have hate-crime laws, civil rights organizations around the world were applying the term hate crime broadly to describe bias crimes involving numerous characteristics used to discriminate social groups by the beginning of the 21st century. However, with the application of the broader term, controversy resides over whether the laws for hate-crimes are redundant with criminal laws or whether the hate-crimes are fundamentally different and should be separated from pre-existing laws.

In United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) was held in Vienna on May 2019 to tackle the crimes motivated by intolerance and discrimination as this issue poses direct threats to human rights, sustainable development and peace and security. There were two motions made: making a UN plan of action to set a system for preventing hate speech and ensuring the safety of religious sanctuaries. This commission was crucial for understanding how good standards and practices could help address the problems of hate crimes, and it also supported UNODC to promote effective criminal justice systems.



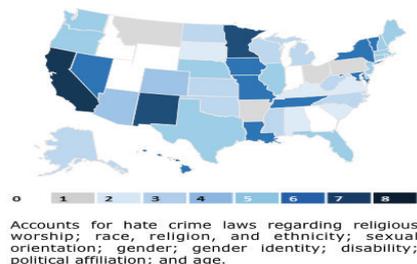
*NAACP making peaceful protest for George Floyd, a recent victim of hate crime*

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There are various organizations that are designed to address the issue of hate crimes to prevent social injustice and violence. For instance, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the largest civil right organization in the U.S., attempts to eliminate racial discrimination and hatred while promoting the rights of all citizens, and the Fair Fight Initiative opposes to injustice and defends hate crimes by actions to raise its awareness.

### Possible Solutions

There is a wide range of problems regarding the topic of hate crimes, but the following actions can be created as some possible solutions tackling its problems:



*Hate Crime Laws by States in the U.S.*

#### *Encouraging More Reports of Hate Crime*

According to the FBI report, although approximately 250,000 hate crimes take place each year in the United States, only 2% of them are found to be reported. For example, while the FBI reported that in 2015, 87 major cities had complete zero hate crimes, and it is likely that victims simply failed to participate and correctly report the hate crime incidents. Therefore, encouragement for timely report of hate crimes by incentivizing jurisdictions to make thorough reports to the FBI for reasonable analysis of data.

#### *Developing the State Level Protection*

Although numerous set up of legislations were made around the globe, some countries or particular regions in certain countries failed to have specific hate crime laws. For instance, in North America, the U.S. had four states that did not have any hate crime laws. There should be further conferences made in attempt to strengthen and maintain the hate crime laws.

#### *Preventing the Hate Speech*

The United Nations has strived to regulate the hate speech as it is “a menace to democratic values, social stability and peace”. As directing this issue helps to prevent atrocity crimes and terrorism, armed conflict, and serious violence, stopping of hate speech can lessen the number of hate crime incidents. Prevention of the Hate Speech can be made through the means such as creating laws that prohibit hate speech against targeted and identifiable groups.

### Glossary

*Supremacists:* People who support the supremacy of a particular racial group.

*Nationalism Movement:* The movement that promotes the interest of a particular nation in attempt to maintain the nation’s sovereignty.

*Anti-Semitism:* hostility to and prejudice against the Jewish People.

*The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009:* A federal act that

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criminalizes the assault that causes bodily injury with a weapon motivated by hatred of race, skin color, religion, or ethnicity.

*Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)*: The commissions of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) that acts as the principal policy making body of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice.

*Hate Speech*: The public speech that encourages violence towards a person or a group based on factors including race, region, sex, or sexual orientation.

### **Timeline**

*February 22, 1989*-The Hate Crimes Statistics Act is reestablished in the U.S. House of Representatives

*February 8, 1990*-The U.S. Senate passes the Hate Crimes Statistics Act

*September 21, 1993*-House passes the Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act

*November 13, 1997*-The Hate Crimes Prevention Act is introduced in the House and the Senate

*June 7, 1988*-Three white men beat up James Byrd Jr. and James Byrd Jr. dies

*October 6-7, 1988*-Matthew Shepard meets two men (Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson) and is killed in the cold of the night

*March/April 2007*-The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act is introduced in the House

*Summer of 2007*-Judy Shepard, the mother of Matthew Shepard, is featured on HRC's Equality magazine, and she promotes the awareness of the damaging effects of hate and importance of embracing diversity

*April 2009*-The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act is presented in the House, and the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act is introduced to the Senate

*April 21, 2009*-HRC announces the #FightHateNow hashtag for Twitter

*April 27-29, 2009*-HRC holds a national call-in campaign for the supporters to call their congressional representatives to emphasize hate crimes legislation

*October 28, 2009*-President Barack Obama signs the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act into law

*July 13, 2013*-the Black Lives Movement starts after the acquittal of George Zimmerman who shot and killed Trayvon Martin

*May 25, 2020*-George Floyd dies due to discrimination, and the Black Lives Movement spreads globally

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