

# The Scope of Hate in 2016

## This Week in Hate

By ANNA NORTH DEC. 28, 2016



People protesting in New York City on election night.  
Credit Christian Hansen for The New York Times

How many hate crimes have been committed since the election? The short answer is, we don't know.

National data on hate crime is scarce. The F.B.I. releases [annual statistics](#) on hate crimes, but not every incident is reported to the agency. And some incidents of bias-motivated harassment or intimidation don't fit the F.B.I.'s definition of a hate crime. However, the Southern Poverty Law Center and other groups are studying the problem with an eye to providing more comprehensive data. Below are a few things we know about trends in hate crime before and after the election, false reports and more.

### **According to the F.B.I., hate crimes rose in 2015.**

The F.B.I. hasn't released hate crime data for 2016 yet, but in November [it reported](#) a total of 5,850 hate crimes in 2015, up from 5,479 in [2014](#). The biggest jump was in anti-Muslim hate crimes, which [rose by 67 percent](#) last year. Anti-Semitic crimes were up 9 percent, and anti-black crimes rose almost 8 percent.

Terrorist attacks in the United States and Europe may have stirred up anti-Muslim hatred in 2015, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. But Donald Trump's campaign promises about banning Muslims may have played an even bigger role. "Whenever a politician starts attacking a particular population," said Heidi Beirich, who directs the S.P.L.C.'s yearly count of hate groups, "we tend to get hate crimes."

### **The Southern Poverty Law Center has found [more than 1,000 reports](#) of hate incidents since the election.**

The group counted 1,094 reports of harassment and intimidation between Nov. 9 and Dec. 12. According to Ms. Beirich, this number is unusually high, more than the group would usually see over a six-month period.

Reported incidents included a homophobic voice mail sent to a church, a racial slur directed at a teenage boy and a [threatening letter](#) sent to mosques around the country. Immigrants were the most common target of hate and harassment, followed by African-Americans and Muslims). The S.P.L.C.

has counted 26 incidents of hate or harassment aimed at Mr. Trump's supporters in the month after the election.

Some reports to the group have been firsthand accounts, while others have been news stories sent in by readers. The S.P.L.C. is working to verify all reports and has verified about half so far.

### **Thirteen other reports appeared to be false.**

The S.P.L.C. has [a list](#) of reports that have been proved to be or are probably false, including the [claim by a Muslim student](#) that she was attacked by Trump supporters on a Manhattan subway.

It's not unusual to see some false claims amid an uptick in hate crimes, said Ms. Beirich. "The hoaxes are terrible," she said, "but it doesn't make these other things any less real."

### **The number of reports is falling.**

Starting with more than 200 the [day after the election](#), the number of reports per day fell to the single digits in early December. The same thing happened in Britain after Brexit, said Ms. Beirich, with a surge in hate crimes followed by a drop. However, she said, if the Trump administration "continues to demonize certain populations, whether it be Latinos or immigrants or the Muslim community," hate crimes against those groups will continue: "That's a pattern that has played itself out over and over again."

Elected officials at the state and city level, as well as members of the community, can help fight hate and harassment by speaking out in support of immigrants and others who are vulnerable, she said. Law enforcement needs to take hate crimes seriously and investigate them aggressively.

Ms. Beirich said that because Mr. Trump's campaign and election have brought such a jump in hate crimes, she felt he had a duty to denounce them much more vigorously than he has. George W. Bush's [address](#) at a mosque six days after 9/11, in which he said, "Islam is peace," had a big effect on anti-Muslim harassment. President-elect Trump needs to do more than make a few comments in interviews, she said. "What we need is real leadership on his part to tamp this down."

*If you have experienced harassment, [these resources](#) may be helpful. If you witness harassment, [here are some tips](#) for responding. This Week in Hate is collecting submissions of incidents that have already been reported to law enforcement or in other media outlets. Send submissions to [weekinhate@nytimes.com](mailto:weekinhate@nytimes.com).*