

Why We Need a Project to Document Hate Crimes

This Week in Hate

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD JAN. 17, 2017



Credit Christopher Lee for The New York Times

[This Week in Hate](#) highlights hate crimes and harassment around the country since the election of Donald Trump.

Reliable data on hate crimes is hard to come by. As reports of racist, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic harassment and attacks poured in after the election of Donald Trump, many Americans wondered whether they represented a nationwide increase in hate crime. While the Southern Poverty Law Center saw [a dramatic increase in reports](#) after the election, it's not yet clear whether this indicates a nationwide trend.

That's one reason This Week in Hate is joining with ProPublica and a coalition of other organizations to work on [Documenting Hate](#), a project that aims to gather data on hate crimes and incidents of bias around the country. Documenting Hate will analyze information from law enforcement, news reports, nonprofit groups and individuals in order to investigate topics like how many hate crimes occur annually, which parts of the country have the highest prevalence and whether the frequency or severity of hate crimes has changed since the election of Mr. Trump. This Week in Hate and several news organizations will publish results from those investigations.

Here are some reports of hate crimes and harassment that have drawn public attention in recent days.

- As many as 16 Jewish community facilities in the Eastern United States [received bomb threats](#) last Monday. At a community center in Rockville, Md., more than 300 people, including 200 preschoolers, [were evacuated](#). No bombs were found at the facilities, but the F.B.I. [is investigating](#) the threats.

- A [swastika and the word “bomb”](#) were found on a bathroom wall at a Jewish community center on Staten Island last Wednesday. Police investigated and did not find a bomb.
- Last Monday, a woman in Nampa, Idaho, discovered that [her car had been vandalized](#) with the words “go back”; paint was poured over the car, its windows were smashed and its radio and air conditioner were damaged. The car’s owner was born in Nigeria but is not a recent immigrant. Police are investigating the incident as a possible hate crime.
- A former Republican Party county chairman in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, discovered last Monday that his van had been [vandalized with an anti-Trump message](#).
- The garage of a family in Sylvania Township, a suburb of Toledo, Ohio, was [vandalized last Tuesday](#) with a swastika and a racist message aimed at Arabs. Police are investigating the incident. One of the family members, 21-year-old Malak Ayache, has painted over the vandalism with the message “Toledo [heart]s Arabs” to mark [the support](#) her family has received from neighbors since the incident. “I honestly want everyone to know that this negative, hateful act is not going to affect this family,” [she said](#).

Documenting Hate has developed [a form](#) to help people report hate crimes or incidents of bias for inclusion in the data analysis. If you have experienced, witnessed or read about a hate crime or incident of bias or harassment, you can use the form to send information about the incident to the Documenting Hate partners, including This Week in Hate. The form is not a report to law enforcement or any government agency. You can [access the form here](#).

If you have experienced harassment, [these resources](#) may be helpful. If you witness harassment, [here are some tips](#) for responding. You can contact This Week in Hate at weekinhate@nytimes.com.