

Hate Crime in San Diego County

A hate crime is a traditional offense such as murder, arson, or vandalism with an added element of bias. For the purposes of collecting statistics, the FBI has defined a hate crime as a “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.” Beginning in 2008, the Criminal Justice Research Division of SANDAG began coordinating with local law enforcement agencies to obtain hate crime statistics reported to the FBI through the State¹ that included the number of hate crime events, offenses, victims and suspects, as well as other details of the incident (i.e., bias motivation, location, victim/suspect characteristics). On an annual basis, SANDAG has summarized these statistics as part of the Annual Crime in the Region report. In addition, for the first time, and coinciding with [National Crime Victims’ Rights week](#), additional analyses are presented here with the ten² years of data now available.

“Hate crimes are different from other crimes. They strike at the heart of one’s identity—they strike at our sense of self, our sense of belonging. The end result is loss—loss of trust, loss of dignity, and in the worst case, loss of life. Hate crimes impact not just individuals, but entire communities.”

-James Comey, Director, FBI, in a [2014 speech to the Anti-Defamation League](#)

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As Figure 1 shows, the number of hate crimes reported to law enforcement in the San Diego region increased from 2015 to 2016 (18%), but this number was still the third lowest in the past ten years. These 84 events included 103 victims and 107 suspects.

Figure 1: NUMBER OF HATE CRIME EVENTS REPORTED IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION



Of the hate crime events reported in 2016,

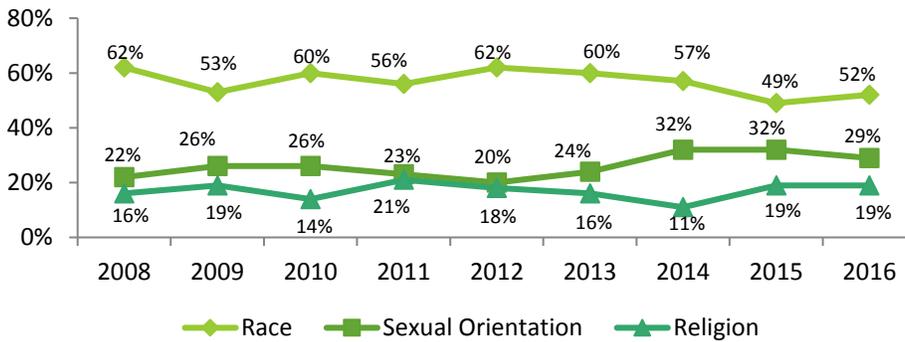
- The suspect was a male in 98 percent;
- The most common locations, accounting for half of all events, included a residence (27%) and a highway, road, or public street (23%);
- Almost nine in ten (89%) were against an individual, as opposed to a business or some other type of organization;
- 69 percent involved a male victim, 25 percent a female victim, and 5 percent both a male and female victim;
- The victim and suspect (when relationship could be determined) were more likely to not know one another (72%) than to have any relationship (28%);
- 69 percent involved a violent offense, 30 percent a property offense, and 1 percent both; and
- The three most common types of offensive acts included verbal slurs (34%), graffiti (21%), and threatening/annoying calls, letters, flyers, emails, or texts (18%).

¹ While these statistics are verified on an annual basis, it is important to note that it is possible numbers could change between what is reported to SANDAG and the State and minor inconsistencies could exist in overall numbers.

² While SANDAG did not begin compiling all hate crime information until 2008, a comparison year of statewide data from 2007 was initially presented.

Since 2008, the primary motivation for hate crime events in San Diego County has been documented as related to the victim’s perceived race/ethnicity, accounting for 49 percent to 62 percent of all events in any given year. The second most common reason has consistently been a victim’s (perceived) sexual orientation, followed by religion. Additional analyses revealed that the type of offensive act and relationship between the victim and suspect did not vary significantly by motive in 2016.

Figure 2: PRIMARY HATE CRIME MOTIVATION IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION



Bias motivation in the 84 hate crime events in the San Diego region in 2016:

- **31% were anti-Black**
- **19% anti-gay (male)/anti-homosexual**
- **11% anti-lesbian/bi-sexual/transgender**
- 10% anti-Islamic
- 8% anti-Hispanic
- 6% anti-Jewish
- 5% anti-White
- 5% anti-Arab
- 1% anti-Asian/Pacific Islander
- 1% anti-other nationality
- 1% anti-other religion
- 1% anti-Mormon
- 1% anti-other Christian
- 1% anti-other citizenship status/race

837: Number of hate crime events in California in 2015, with a race bias accounting for 51%, sexual orientation bias 23%, and religious bias 23%.

5,818: Number of hate crime events in the U.S. reported to the FBI in 2015, with a race bias accounting for 59%, religious bias 20%, sexual orientation bias 20%, and disability 1%.

Because the impact that hate crimes can have on individuals, families, and communities as a whole, it is essential that reliable documentation occur, but even more so, that community dialogue about human and civil rights is made a priority and that prevention activities and trainings are easily available. To learn more about efforts in the region, including the City of San Diego’s Human Rights Commission, please visit <https://www.sandiego.gov/human-relations>.