



COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

"Enriching lives through effective and caring service"

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COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION'S STATEMENT ON THE RECENT HATE MURDERS IN CHARLESTON AND WHITE SUPREMACIST VIOLENCE AGAINST AFRICAN AMERICANS

Today the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations released this statement regarding the recent killings of nine people by a white supremacist during a prayer meeting at Emanuel African Methodist Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

"The outrageous act of racist violence that recently took the lives of nine African Americans at a church prayer meeting in Charleston is a grim and shocking reminder of the continuing need for committing resources to educate and prevent racism, prejudice, and violence in all its forms.

We at the Commission know all too well the persistence of hate crimes targeting African Americans and those carried out by white supremacists, even in this day and age.

Our Commission's annual report informs us that hate crimes against African Americans in L.A. County usually account for about 60% of the racial hate crimes in our county, even though they constitute about only 9% of the population. And hate crime linked to white supremacist ideology is much higher than most would imagine in such a metropolis that's long been racially and culturally

diverse, consistently accounting for about 15-20% of all hate crimes reported.
<http://www.lahumanrelations.org/hatecrime/hatecrimearchive-reports.htm>)

However, we know we can reduce hate violence. Our region, country and world has made genuine progress towards racial equity.

Our programs, such as the Racialized Gang Violence Prevention Initiative, and the Countywide Regional Gang Violence Reduction Initiative, as well as our No Haters Here! youth human relations leadership programs, have promoted respect for everyone's human rights and greatly decreased hate crimes targeting African Americans and others in communities and schools with high levels of bias-motivated violence.

We as a society must be willing to invest more in such programs if we are to address the root causes in structural and institutional racism, and to reach those who harbor racist ideas, are prone to violence, and are being targeted for recruitment by white supremacist groups, as we can see in the plastic bags of candy coupled with racist messages that recently appeared in nearby Orange County and the horrific killings of six Americans of the Sikh faith by a white supremacist at their place of worship in Wisconsin in 2012.

We express our deepest sympathies and condolences to the family, friends and communities of those whose lives were suddenly ended when they were shot to death by the 20 year old white supremacist: State Senator and Pastor Clementa Pinckney, Cynthia Hurd, Tywanza Sanders, Sharonda Singleton, Myra Thompson, Ethel Lance, Susie Jackson, Rev. Daniel Simmons Sr., and DePayne Doctor. (To learn more about them, go to <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/06/18/415539516/the-victims-9-were-slain-at-charlestons-emanuel-ame-church>)

We stand with them at this tragic moment in our history as a nation, and we pledge to honor their lives by recommitting to our mission to "transform prejudice into acceptance, inequity into justice, and hostility into peace."

Commission President Susanne Cumming, Esq.
Commission Executive Director Robin S. Toma, Esq.