

## 2021 ANTI-LATINO/A HATE CRIMES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

After rising 58% in 2020, reported anti-Latino/a crimes in Los Angeles County climbed another 10% in 2021 from 106 to 117. They comprised 25% of racial crimes, similar to previous years.

Because Latino/as comprise about half of L.A. County residents, this is a surprisingly low percentage especially in light of the on-going, volatile public debate on immigration policy which has resulted in increased xenophobia. Major cities like Los Angeles, Houston, Denver, and Philadelphia have documented significant declines in the number of crimes reported by Latino/a victims since the start of the Trump presidency.\* It is possible that growing numbers of Latino/a victims are increasingly reluctant to contact law enforcement because they fear detection by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This growing anxiety also could be a factor in the under-reporting of hate crimes.

Reported hate crimes in which anti-immigrant slurs were used (e.g. “Wetback”) skyrocketed 48%, the largest number ever recorded. Suspects used anti-immigrant slurs in nearly half of anti-Latino/a crimes. In 78% of these crimes specifically anti-Mexican slurs were employed (up from 68%). There was one crime that was specifically anti-Salvadoran and the remainder did not specify any Latino/a ethnicity.

Of the larger victim groups, reported crimes targeting Latino/as were the most likely to be violent (88%, identical to the previous year). This was the third year in a row that Latino/a victims of racial crime experienced the highest rate of violence. Furthermore, the 88% rate of violence is the highest percentage experienced by Latino/a victims in our accessible records.

The most frequent criminal offense in anti-Latino/a crimes was simple assault (36%), followed by aggravated assault (31%), intimidation (19%), and vandalism (11%). There were also 2 cases of robbery and a lone case of disorderly conduct. The distribution of criminal offenses was almost identical to the previous year, with the exception of an uptick in cases of intimidation.

Latino/as were attacked most frequently in public places (45%), followed by residences (29%), and businesses (24%). There were also single crimes that took place at government buildings, schools, and religious sites. This represented a slight decline in anti-Latino/a crimes in public places and small increases in those that occurred at residences and businesses.

Sixty-four percent of anti-Latino/a crimes were committed by African Americans (up from 47%), followed by whites (23%, down from 43%), and Latino/as (12%, up from 9%). There was one Asian-on-Latino crime. In Latino/a-on-Latino/a crimes, many of the suspects made anti-immigrant slurs, sometimes in Spanish.

It should be noted that in addition to being the targets of racial hate crime, Latino/as also comprised the largest group of victims in sexual orientation crimes (40%, down from 44%) and anti-transgender crimes (51% down from 58%).

\*FiveThirtyEight, “*Latinos in Three Cities Are Reporting Fewer Crimes Since Trump took Office,*” ABC News, May 18, 2017

## **Actual 2021 Anti-Latino/a Crimes in L.A. County**

### **April 29, Koreatown**

A Latina female and her mother were selling tamales on a street corner. A black male approached them and yelled, "You need to leave the country! You don't have papers!" As the suspect walked away he threatened to call the police. He then threw a bottle at the victim, hitting her in the shoulder. The bottle then shattered on the ground and the suspect fled on foot.

### **June 26, Hollywood**

Five Latino/as were moving furniture out of an apartment when a black male suspect exited his unit and started arguing with one of them. He yelled, "Too fucking loud, fucking Mexicans" before punching the first victim multiple times. The other victims tried to intervene but the suspect pushed and punched them. He then shouted, "I'll kill you motherfuckers... fuckin' Mexicans! I'm gonna get my gun and shoot all you Mexicans."

### **August 30, East Hollywood**

A Latino male was unloading groceries from his car. A white male approached him and started verbally harassing him. He told the victim "Return to your own country! You can't even speak English!" The suspect then spat on him. In response, the victim shoved the suspect and picked up a tire jack to defend himself. The suspect armed himself with a wrench and struck the victim's head. The suspect entered a car where a second white male was seated in the passenger seat. The first suspect then attempted to drive away. When the victim tried to stop him, the second suspect exited the vehicle and threw several objects at the victim, causing him to back away. The suspects drove off.