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ANTI-LATINO/A HATE CRIMES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY IN 2019

Latino/as were targeted in 25% of racial hate crimes in 2019. After increasing four years in a row, anti-Latino/a crimes declined 22% from 85 in 2018 to 66. Because Latino/as constitute about half of Los Angeles County residents, this is a surprisingly low number, especially in light of the on-going, volatile public debate on immigration policy which has resulted in increased xenophobia. For example, on August 3, 2019 there was a mass-shooting by a white supremacist at a Wal-Mart in El Paso that killed 22 and injured 24. The overwhelming majority of the victims were Latino/as.

Local law enforcement agencies have been recording significant declines in the numbers of reported sexual assaults and complaints of domestic violence from members of the Latino/a community. Former LAPD Chief Charlie Beck speculated that these declines could be due to growing numbers of Latino/a residents being reluctant to contact law enforcement because they fear detection by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Therefore, it is likely that there were many more anti-Latino/a hate crimes in 2019 that were never reported to law enforcement.

In 64% (32) of anti-Latino/a crimes, anti-immigrant slurs (e.g. "Wetback!") were expressed and more than half (20) used specifically anti-Mexican language.

Eighty-eight percent of anti-Latino/a hate crimes were of a violent nature, the highest of any racial/ethnic group. The previous year the rate of violence was 68%.

The most frequent criminal offense in anti-Latino/a crimes was aggravated assault (45%), followed by simple assault (27%), intimidation (15%), and vandalism (11%).

Latino/as were attacked most frequently in public places (41%), followed by residences (24%), businesses (23%), and government buildings (6%).

In anti-Latino/a crimes in which suspects were identified, the victims were targeted most often by African Americans (50%), followed by whites (42%), other Latino/as (7%), and Asians/Pacific Islanders (2%). There were also two cases in which there were inter-ethnic hate crimes committed among different groups of Latino/as.

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 (46%) and anti-transgender crimes (59%).

The following are examples of anti-Latino/a hate crimes reported in 2019:

February 22, Boyle Heights

A Latina female victim was getting into her car after grocery shopping. When she opened her driver's side door, she accidentally tapped the car next to her. A white female became enraged and yelled "You hit my fucking car!" The victim was immediately apologetic, but the suspect continued to yell, "You fucking Mexican! I'm going to call ICE! You don't belong here, you fucking bitch!" A white male

approached and also confronted the victim. Fearful, the victim tried calling the police on her cell phone but the female suspect retrieved a handgun and pointed it at her. The victim then ran inside the store to get help and the suspects drove off.

June 30, Beverly Hills

At a public park a white male confronted a Latino male seated on a bench and told him to leave. When the victim refused, the suspect told him, "Go back to your country," punched him, and pushed him off the bench.

July 9, DTLA

A Latino male victim was setting up janitorial equipment for work when a black male suspect approached him and began kicking his equipment. He then pushed the victim who twisted his ankle as he fell to the ground. The suspect yelled, "Fucking wetback! Fucking illegal! I will call ICE!" The victim fled and entered an office building and notified security.

August 3, Van Nuys

A Mexican couple was at a Colombian salsa dance when they saw a male friend attacked by a group of 15 Colombian men. When the wife asked why they were fighting, a suspect replied, "Because you're fucking Mexicans." Then a suspect grabbed the wife by the hair and another suspect kicked her. The husband was pushed to the ground and a suspect stepped on his ankle.

October 1, Elysian Park

A homeless black female confronted a Latina grandmother, her daughter and four grandchildren who were walking home from the store. She yelled, "You fucking Mexicans! Go back to your country!" The suspect then picked up an office chair and prepared to throw it at the family. The adult women grabbed the hands of the children and ran away. The suspect pursued them for 80 feet with the chair still in her hands. The victims were able to enter their apartment and call the police. After Latino officers detained the suspect she yelled obscenities and racial slurs at them and tried to kick one officer in the groin. At the jail dispensary the suspect yelled at Latina nurses calling them, "Wetbacks" and "Fucking Mexican bitches! "

The full report is available at our website: www.hrc.lacounty.gov