



**Los Angeles County
Department of Workforce Development,
Aging and Community Services
Commission on Human Relations
510 South Vermont Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90020
(213) 738-2788**

ANTI-LATINO/A HATE CRIMES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY IN 2020

After declining 22% the previous year, anti-Latino/a hate crimes spiked 58% from 67 to 106. Latino/as were targeted in 26% of reported racial hate crimes in 2020. 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.

In 62% of these crimes specifically anti-Mexican slurs were employed. There were single crimes each targeting Guatemalans and Peruvians. In the remaining anti-Latino/a crimes, no specific ethnic group was mentioned.

In 2020, there were a record number of hate crimes in which the suspects used specifically anti-immigrant slurs (e.g., “Wetback!”). Of the 56 “immigrant-bashing” racial crimes overall, 77% targeted Latino/as. Two-thirds included specifically anti-Mexican language.

Of the larger victim groups, crimes targeting Latino/as were the most likely to be violent (88%, identical to the previous year). This was the second 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 (32%), intimidation (15%), vandalism (9%), and robbery (5%). The previous year aggravated assaults were the most common offense.

Latino/as were attacked most frequently in public places (50%), followed by residences (24%), businesses (20%), and schools (3%). This distribution was very similar to the previous year.

In anti-Latino/a crimes in which suspects were identified, the victims were targeted most often by African Americans (47%), followed by whites (43%), and other Latino/as (9%).

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 (44%) and anti-transgender crimes (56%).

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

The following are examples of anti-Latino/a hate crimes reported in 2020:

October 8, Venice

A black female motorist struck a parked car's rear bumper. The vehicle's owner, a Latino male, was sitting inside and emerged to see if there was any damage. The suspect got out of her car and swung a metal pipe attempting to strike the victim in the head. The victim used his arms to protect himself and was struck in the elbow. The suspect yelled, "You fucking beaner! Go back to Mexico! Fuck you Mexican!" The suspect then struck the victim's car 15-18 times.

October 22, South Los Angeles

A 60 year-old Latina woman and her daughter were walking past a black female when the suspect lunged at the victim. She ripped a chain off her neck, punched her in the face and beat her with a tent pole, while yelling, "Immigrant shit!" When officers arrived, they tried interviewing the victim but because she was bleeding profusely, they had her transported to the hospital and treated for her injuries.

November 9, South Los Angeles

A Latino male victim was sitting on a bench, waiting for a friend. A Latino male suspect approached him, yelling, "This is Trump's country!" and "Wetback!" The suspect attempted to punch the victim, but he missed. The victim turned to leave, and the suspect followed him and tried to strike him again. The victim defended himself by punching the suspect in the face. The suspect continued to call him "Wetback," and then fled on foot.

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