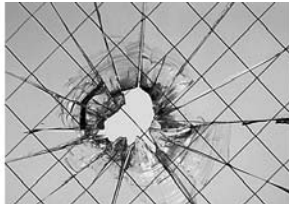


Country Panorama



2008 Hate Crime Survey

About Human Rights First

Human Rights First believes that building respect for human rights and the rule of law will help ensure the dignity to which every individual is entitled and will stem tyranny, extremism, intolerance, and violence.

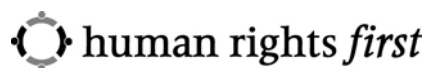
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Human Rights First is practical and effective. We advocate for change at the highest levels of national and international policymaking. We seek justice through the courts. We raise awareness and understanding through the media. We build coalitions among those with divergent views. And we mobilize people to act.

Human Rights First is a non-profit, nonpartisan international human rights organization based in New York and Washington D.C. To maintain our independence, we accept no government funding.

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HRF's Fighting Discrimination Program

The Fighting Discrimination Program has been working since 2002 to reverse the rising tide of antisemitic, racist, anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, and homophobic violence and other bias crime in Europe, the Russian Federation, and North America. We report on the reality of violence driven by discrimination, and work to strengthen the response of governments to combat this violence. We advance concrete, practical recommendations to improve hate crimes legislation and its implementation, monitoring and public reporting, the training of police and prosecutors, the work of official anti-discrimination bodies, and the capacity of civil society organizations and international institutions to combat violent hate crimes. For more information on the program, visit www.humanrightsfirst.org/discrimination or email FD@humanrightsfirst.org.

2008 Hate Crime Survey

Country Panorama is an excerpt from Human Rights First's *2008 Hate Crime Survey*, which includes sections examining six facets of violent hate crime in the 56 countries that comprise the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE): *Violence Based on Racism and Xenophobia*, *Antisemitic Violence*, *Violence Against Muslims*, *Violence Based on Religious Intolerance*, *Violence Against Roma*, and *Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Bias*. The Survey also examines government responses to violent hate crimes in sections on *Systems of Monitoring and Reporting* and *The Framework of Criminal Law* and includes a Ten-Point Plan for governments to strengthen their responses. The Survey also includes an in-depth look at the *Russian Federation*, *Ukraine*, and the *United States* and contains a *Country Panorama* section that profiles individual hate crime cases from more than 30 countries within the OSCE.

Acknowledgements

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Country Panorama

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Executive Summary

Although the incidence of violent hate crimes may vary from country to country, no state in the region of the OSCE is immune from the prejudice and bigotry that stand behind them. This panorama of cases and brief country descriptions looks across the OSCE region at crimes motivated by bias based on race and ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.

The section provides examples of cases that are profiled in the various thematic sections of the *2008 Hate Crime Survey*. It is not intended to be all-encompassing in terms of the cases described nor in the countries covered. Nor is the number of cases that have been included under each country heading directly proportional to the frequency of incidents occurring in that country. In many cases, the availability of incident reports may be as much a product of better government and NGO monitoring, more extensive public reporting, and greater confidence in the criminal justice system as it is a reflection of the severity of the problem. Where no government monitoring and public reporting is available, we rely on credible reporting from NGOs and the media.

While for most countries the sections below are limited to representative case examples, we have provided more substantive descriptions of the nature of hate crimes in **France, Germany, and the United Kingdom**—where government efforts have ensured that there is ample data to allow some level of analysis of the problem. With **Russia, Ukraine, and the United States**, we have provided a summary of and links to stand-alone reports on those countries that are part of the *2008 Hate Crime Survey*.

Countries Profiled

Armenia

- On December 23, 2007, in Yerevan, vandals desecrated a memorial to Jewish victims of the Holocaust in the city's Aragast Park, daubing it with a swastika and black paint.¹
- On March 29, 2007, a Jehovah's Witness was reportedly attacked and choked at his workplace after a co-worker learned of his religious affiliation.²

Austria

- In Graz, on February 5, 2008, the local police reported that close to 60 tombstones of Muslims had been desecrated. It was unclear when the attack occurred and the police have not ruled out the involvement of right-wing extremists.³

Azerbaijan

- On April 17, 2007, four men broke into a building Jehovah's Witnesses rented for religious meetings in Baku and attacked two members of the congregation and destroyed property inside; although witnesses identified the attackers, police reportedly refused to investigate.⁴

Belarus

- On May 21, 2008, at about 11:00 p.m., Edward Tarletski, an openly gay Belarusian man and the founder of Lambda Belarus, the first gay rights organization in Belarus was badly beaten upon arriving at his apartment building in Minsk. He was attacked by three young people between 20 and 25 years old. According to Tarletski: "I was approaching the entrance when I saw young people

smoking nearby... One of them called me by my surname—to make it clear that it was me, I think. Another one unexpectedly hit me in the face, and I fell down. They kicked me many times, mostly in the head. Then they escaped. I lost consciousness. A neighbor then helped me to reach my apartment. The villains took nothing: in my bag I had money and a camera." This was the third such assault on Tarletski.⁵ A number of incidents of vandalism were reported in 2007. In October, vandals damaged 15 graves in Babruysk and daubed antisemitic graffiti and a swastika on cemetery gates.⁶ In June, vandals damaged four Jewish graves in a cemetery in Mohyliov, where previous attacks had been reported.⁷ In February, vandals in Minsk smashed the cenotaph that is part of the monument marking the site of the murder of Jews from Bremen in the Minsk ghetto.⁸

Belgium

- On February 7, 2008, in Liège, two young women, 19 and 20 years old, described as being of "Maghreb origin," were attacked by three men in the city center. The victims were verbally abused and physically threatened with a firearm. One of the perpetrators was described as having right-wing extremist affiliations. Following a trial, the two primary offenders were sentenced to jail sentences of 15 months and 12 months (of which six were suspended), respectively.⁹
- On December 15, 2007 unknown attackers put burning paper through the mail slot in an Antwerp synagogue door and set it alight; a worshipper saw the fire and it was quickly put out. A complaint was filed with police.¹⁰

- In Antwerp, the Machsike Hadass synagogue was pelted with stones in a series of incidents beginning on December 4, 2007. The stone-throwers, who gathered on a nearby railway embankment, broke numerous windows.¹¹

Bulgaria

- In early April 2008, offensive graffiti was smeared on the walls of the building of the Chief Mufti's Office. Hussein Hafyzov, the Chief Secretary of the Chief Mufti's Office in Bulgaria, explained that other shrines and mosques around the country have been desecrated in the same fashion. "It has happened many times in Kazanlak, Pleven, and Varna. Our statistics reveal that our buildings—administrative ones and mosques in all 12 regional Mufti's Offices—have been desecrated over 50 times in the last ten years."¹²
- On the night of August 12, 2007, in Sofia, a group of an estimated dozen "skinheads" assaulted six Roma—three men and three women—as they were returning to their homes. Four were injured and one required hospitalization. The victims were interviewed by the Romani Baht Foundation, a Roma rights organization, which said the victims had telephoned for help to the district police, but that police had refused to send a patrol car.¹³
- In March 2007, vandals in Plovdiv daubed a swastika and other antisemitic graffiti on a memorial commemorating the rescue of Bulgarian Jews from the Holocaust, at the entrance to a Jewish community building, and at the University of Plovdiv.¹⁴

Canada

- On June 28, 2008, vandals toppled and shattered tombstones in Ottawa, Ontario, at the Bank Street Jewish cemetery.¹⁵
- In June 2007, vandals daubed with antisemitic graffiti and set alight the summer house of a rabbi and another neighboring house in Val David, a Hasidic Jewish community north of Montreal.¹⁶
- Reports of antisemitic violence against individuals from B'Nai Brith's 2007 annual audit included the following: in May, in Montreal, a Hasidic boy was beaten by an assailant outside the Skver Toldos Jewish School, which was firebombed in 2006. In June, in Toronto, a Rabbi was assaulted on a public street in broad daylight. In August, in Toronto, visibly Jewish students were assaulted on the way home from school. In October, in Montreal, an identifiably Jewish couple was swarmed and assaulted by eight individuals who yelled "Jew, Jew!"¹⁷

Czech Republic

- On November 24, 2007, in Zlin, three young men described as skinheads shouted racist insults and then attacked Sri Lankan student Pradeep Manohara Mahadura as he waited with friends at a bus stop. He was beaten and knocked to the ground and then kicked in the stomach and head before passersby intervened to help. Police in January 2008 said three teenagers aged 15 to 17 would be charged with "breach of the peace and attempted serious bodily harm;" as minors, they could face up to five years imprisonment.¹⁸
- In Olomouc, on August 24, 2007, a group attacked two young Roma Czechs, aged 18 and 23, at an open air cinema, while shouting anti-Roma epithets. The younger victim received facial injuries while the other, who was knocked to the ground

and kicked, suffered a broken nose and a concussion.

- In July 2007, vandals overturned tombstones, breaking five, at the 19th century Jewish cemetery in Pisek, south of Prague. Earlier in the month, vandals toppled 35 tombstones, shattering two, in a 19th century Jewish cemetery in Bohumin.¹⁹
- On April 7, 2007, vandals desecrated the Jewish cemetery in Hranice na Morave during Passover, reportedly destroying many tombstones.²⁰ A week before, vandals attacked the Jewish cemetery in Krnov, in North Bohemia, destroying the three oldest tombstones remaining.²¹

Denmark

- On March 19, 2008, Deniz Ozgur Uzun, a 16-year-old teenager of Turkish origin, was distributing newspapers in the Amager district of Copenhagen. He was verbally harassed from a car by three Danish teenagers aged 15, 17 and 18, respectively, who then stopped, got out of the car and assaulted him with a baseball bat and a hammer. Deniz died the following day after having sustained severe brain damage. One eyewitness reported the use of a racist slur in the course of the assault.²²
- In Copenhagen, the Krystalgade synagogue was vandalized on the night of January 21, 2008 with two windows smashed by rocks.²³

Estonia

- In September, 2007, attackers in Tartu threw stones at a dark-skinned French student. Although the head of an association of foreign students there said the incident was part of a larger problem of neo-Nazi violence, a local police officer downplayed the incident, claiming foreign students in the past two years had been caught up in only a few cases of “robbery, fights, or insults.”²⁴

France

For the second straight year, French authorities reported a decrease in the overall number of hate crimes. In 2007, the official antidiscrimination body, the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH), registered a 23.6 percent reduction in recorded incidents, from a total of 923 “racist, xenophobic, and antisemitic” cases in 2006 to 707 in 2007. People of North African background were the most likely targets of racist violence. Antisemitic offenses—which are registered separately from racist offenses—declined in 2007, although the high levels of personal violence as a proportion of overall incidents remained steady. Official data on hate crimes has been systematically collected and reported since 2002, but incidents involving a number of minority groups are not reflected in the data, leaving discrimination against these groups statistically invisible.

Measures to implement a strong official response to violent hate crimes in France have shown significant progress since 2003. Successive governments have prioritized the adoption and implementation of laws making racist, antisemitic, and sexual orientation bias motives aggravating factors in punishing violent crimes. Arrests and criminal prosecutions have followed improved hate crime monitoring, directives to prosecutors to pursue and report on hate crimes, and periodic statements by public officials at the highest levels pledging new vigor in the fight against hate crimes.

However, bias offenses continued to occur at levels much higher than those recorded in the late 1990s, suggesting the need for further improvements of mechanisms for combating hate crimes. For example, despite legislation providing for penalty enhancement for crimes motivated by sexual orientation bias, there is no reference to hate crimes of this kind in official reports, and no official data on incidents or prosecutions of such crimes is known to have been published by official sources.

The National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNC DH) found a 23.6 percent decrease overall in racist, xenophobic, and antisemitic hate crimes in 2007.

Racist and xenophobic hate crimes declined by 9 percent. Official statistics identify people of North African origin as the victims of 68 percent of the total “racist and xenophobic” incidents, but provide no further insights into the attributes of others who have suffered documented attacks of racist violence.

The figures from the Interior Ministry continue to distinguish the victims of Jewish, Maghreb, and immigrant origin. The CNC DH, which issues its reports using data from the Interior Ministry, continued to use the terms “immigrant” and “of immigrant origin” interchangeably to describe victims of racism and xenophobic violence, while expressly identifying only those of Maghreb origin as a subcategory within this sector. Under this methodology, to be a victim of racism is to be an “immigrant.” There is however, new recognition of the problems posed by a failure to differentiate between distinct groups in the use of the term immigrant. The CNC DH recommends more precise categories, with a view to learning more about racist phenomena, where bias motives may be diverse.

A larger decline was reported in regard to the number of antisemitic incidents, with a decrease of 32.5 percent over 2006 figures. This followed a rise of 6.6 percent in 2006. The level of antisemitic incidents in France remains historically high, and antisemitic threats and violence have recently included attacks on synagogues, Jewish schools and community centers, cemeteries and monuments, and on homes, shops, and property.

Notwithstanding the overall decline in the number of hate crimes, the CNC DH annual report stressed that a recent trend towards an increase in the proportion of violent attacks within the overall number of cases, and in particular violence against persons, was sustained. In particular, the CNC DH noted that the proportion of

aggressive racist and xenophobic acts directed at individuals has increased from 45 percent in 2006 to 51 percent in 2007. Similarly, with antisemitic incidents, the report states that “acts of antisemitism have retained a violent character, which elicits the concern of the CNC DH.”²⁵

Some examples of violent attacks in 2008 included the following:

- On the night of July 24, 2008, Nouredine Rachedi, a 30-year-old French-born statistician, was beaten by two men. An official medical examination diagnosed head injuries, bruising to the face and body. As of the end of August 2008, an 18-year-old was in custody under investigation for the bias-motivated assault.²⁶
- On the morning of February 22, 2008, a group of six youths kidnapped and tortured 19-year-old Mathieu Roumi in Hauts-de-Seine, in an assault that was both antisemitic and homophobic. The victim required hospitalization after being beaten, sexually humiliated, and subjected to antisemitic and homophobic epithets. All six perpetrators were arrested in the days following the attack.²⁷

Despite the overall decline in incidents, a rise was registered in the number of reported incidents involving the desecration of graves and memorials, with police services having registering 10 attacks on cemeteries in 2007, as compared with just 4 in 2006. Among the incidents of national and international resonance in 2007 were attacks on Muslim cemeteries. Such acts continued in 2008:

- In the first week of April 2008, vandals desecrated 148 graves at Notre-Dame de Lorette military cemetery. Swastikas and insults were daubed on the graves that “directly referred to Islam,” according to the state prosecutor. President Sarkozy declared the vandalism “a most unacceptable act of racism.”²⁸

While underreporting of hate crimes to the police remains a problem in France, as in most other countries, there is also some evidence that hate crime motivation may also be underrecorded by police. Those seeking to report hate crime incidents may find police reluctant to record elements of complaints indicating a racist motive. In one widely reported incident, a French citizen of North African background, who was the object of an attack, subsequently told of the particular efforts required to ensure that his statements describing elements of racist and religious bias were taken into account in the police report and subsequent charges.²⁹

While there are no official statistics on violence against LGBT persons, one nongovernmental organization, SOS Homophobie, has been reporting on homophobia in France for more than a decade. In their annual report covering 2007, the organization reported on 1,263 incidents of homophobia. Although this represents a 5 percent decrease over 2006, it is nonetheless the second highest figure in the organization's history of reporting. The number of violent incidents (132) also decreased—by 14 percent over 2006 figures. The percentage of violent incidents in relation to overall incidents—11 percent in 2007—has remained steady at between 11 and 13 percent since 2003.³⁰

Georgia

- On May 1, 2008, in Adjara, vandals reportedly desecrated an unknown number of tombs of Georgian Jews on Peria mountain. A statement by Public Movement “Multinational Georgia,” a coalition of 56 NGOs representing 18 Georgian ethnic communities reported the crime and called upon Georgian authorities to act promptly to hold the perpetrators accountable.³¹

Germany

Violent hate crimes in Germany have been on the rise. Between 2003 and 2006, official figures for right-wing

violent crimes increased steadily from 759 in 2003 to 1,047 in 2006, only decreasing slightly in 2007. Antisemitic violence rose by 37 percent in 2007, although it still comprises a relatively small proportion of overall violent hate crimes. One NGO working against rightwing violence called 2007 a “negative record” year, having documented racist attacks on 600 individuals.

Public officials, Jewish groups, and antiracism analysts have continued to express concern that Eastern Germany has become alarmingly dangerous for foreigners. An expert on rightwing extremism, Anetta Kahane, told the press that “no-go areas—so-called foreigner-free zones—really exist and non-Aryans know why they don't go there.”³² According to a study commissioned by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, far-right beliefs are becoming commonplace, while breeding grounds for right-wing attitudes and beliefs are no longer found only in the economically impoverished eastern areas of the country.³³

Right-wing extremism has become openly aggressive, manifested by personal assaults in the streets and systematic attacks on immigrant-run businesses. Wolfgang Thierse, Social Democrat vice-speaker of the Bundestag, Germany's lower house of parliament, has called rightwing extremism “part of everyday life [that] only attracts attention when the crimes are especially horrific.”³⁴

Victims of xenophobic violence have often been foreign nationals or those perceived to be “non-Germans.” Members of the large population of Turkish origin, both German citizens and nonnationals, face harassment and violence in many parts of the country. People of African and South Asian origin have also been among targets of persistent and sometimes extreme violence. Foreign-owned shops have been targeted for vandalism and arson; members of minorities have been attacked in the street or at public events such as town festivals and on public transportation.

Between 2003 and 2006, official figures for right-wing violent crimes increased steadily from 759 in 2003 to 1,047 in 2006. In 2007, for the first time since 2003, the incidence of right-wing violent crimes decreased to 980, although it remains at historically high levels. Similarly, official figures showed a slight decline in violent xenophobic crime—a subset of right-wing violent crime—from 484 in 2006 to 414 in 2007.

Contrary to these reported declines, Uwe-Karsten Heye, a former German government spokesman and founder of *Gezicht Zeigen!* (Show Your Faces!), an NGO working against right-wing violence, called 2007 a “negative record” year, with 600 people injured as a result of racist attacks. Systematic attacks on immigrant-run businesses (11 in the state of Brandenburg alone) are part of what he called “a strategy to destroy livelihoods and drive out immigrants.”³⁵

As concerns antisemitic violence, official year-end statistics reported a 37 percent rise in “right-wing extremist antisemitic crimes of violence,” from 43 incidents in 2006 to 59 in 2007. These violent offences represented a relatively small proportion when compared to the overall toll of violent crimes attributed to the extreme right in Germany; just 6 percent of the 980 reported incidents. At the same time, these figures show only the most serious crimes of violence, excluding vandalism and the combination of desecration and often violent property damage of attacks on Jewish cemeteries and memorials to victims of the Holocaust.³⁶ According to the German Interior Ministry, between 2002 and 2006, more than 237 Jewish cemeteries were desecrated in Germany, averaging nearly 50 per year.³⁷

During a single weekend of August 17-19, 2007:

- Eight Indians were attacked by a mob of nearly fifty Germans in the town of Mügeln in Saxony. A fight broke out on the dance floor at a party. The Indians left but were then attacked, fleeing and taking refuge in a pizzeria owned by one of the men. All eight

Indians were injured, one seriously. The mob tried to kick in the doors of the pizzeria and damaged the owner’s car. A police spokeswoman “denied there was a neo-Nazi motive behind the attack, despite eye-witnesses accounts of people calling for the foreigners to leave.”³⁸

- In the village of Guntersblum, in Western Germany, a 39-year-old Sudanese man, who was working at a wine festival, was clubbed to the ground with a wine bottle. He spent several days in the hospital. The man’s Egyptian coworker, who came to assist him, lost a finger when he was slashed with a broken bottle.
- In Braunschweig, a 49-year-old Ghanaian man was beaten up and racially abused. One of the perpetrators had links to the right-wing groups. On the same evening, in Magdeburg, a 36-year-old Iraqi man was beaten with a baseball bat by a man who also set his dog on him. Police suspected the perpetrator was a right-wing extremist.
- A rampaging mob smashed stalls and pelted police with bottles in the eastern town of Bützow. The crowd targeted a snack bar operated by a Pakistani man who has been a resident of the town since 2002. The mob yelled anti-Turkish slogans and threatened Mahmood Saqib, shouting “We’ll come up and finish you off!”

The attack in Mügeln triggered particular outrage, with photographs of the bruised and cut faces of Indian men appearing in the nation’s major media. German Chancellor Angela Merkel called the attack “extremely grim and shameful,” underlining how unacceptable it was “for people in German cities to be chased through the streets and beaten.” She pledged to place the issue high on the agenda of a strategy session of the governing coalition.³⁹

While senior German politicians stand firm in their abhorrence of violent xenophobic and rightwing attacks, the police have been accused of not taking these cases

seriously enough and of poor investigatory work that infrequently leads to arrests. Police in the eastern states in particular have been accused of routinely ignoring racially motivated attacks and manipulating statistics to hide the increasing number of incidents involving the neo-Nazis. In one particular case:

- Frank Hüttermann, chief of police in the state of Saxony-Anhalt, was forced to resign after the public found out that he instructed officers not to classify incidents as hate crimes if the perpetrators were not caught. The incident prompted a state parliamentary investigation into police failure to act against neo-Nazi activity. The committee chose to examine six cases, including one assault in which authorities failed to detain suspects who remained at the scene of the crime after police arrived.⁴⁰

Despite the attention given to serious cases involving potentially lethal mob violence, prosecutors in the most notorious cases tended to bring charges only for minor offences, resulting in fines rather than prison terms. Courts have been consistent in penalizing violent xenophobic attacks, even when assaults were perpetrated by suspects with known ties to rightwing extremists. The NGO community, media, and public groups have expressed concerns over light sentences handed down in a number of cases where racial motivation had been apparent. For example:

- Despite the prolonged violence of the Müglen incident, and the serious injuries and damage caused, prosecutors brought charges against just four men. In November 2007, in the first trial, an 18-year-old defendant, tried in a closed hearing by a Leipzig court, admitted to “xenophobic comments” during the attack and was fined 1,800 Euros. Two others were fined for shouting xenophobic slogans. In December, a fourth suspect, charged with leading the mob, was convicted of racial incitement and property damage and sentenced to eight months imprisonment.⁴¹

- The violent attack on Sudanese and Egyptian workers at the wine festival in the village of Guntersblum on August 19, 2007, resulted in light sentences for the perpetrators, known associates of a local neo-Nazi group. The defendants were tried in a closed, juvenile court in Mainz because one of them was a minor at the time of the offence. The court convicted the defendants of causing grave bodily harm, and handed down suspended sentences of 8 to 18 months to three attackers. Another defendant was sentenced to 80 hours of community service. Additionally, the men were required to pay compensation of 8,000 Euros.⁴²

Greece

In its annual report for 2007, the Hellenic League for Human Rights showed a steady increase in racist attacks on immigrants and other minorities, while condemning what it said was the indifference of Greek law enforcement bodies toward the attacks. The report further notes that “violence against immigrants and minorities, in many cases by police officers, is a reality.” In 2007 and 2008, a series of incidents were reported in the capital, Athens, in which migrant workers were the victims of organized attacks by extremist anti-immigration militants.⁴³ In October 2007, human rights activists and immigrants demonstrated in the Rendi section of Athens to protest rising racist attacks, and in particular a series of attacks on Pakistani immigrants living there.⁴⁴ One particularly serious incident occurred a few months later:

- On December 1, 2007, some 25 attackers described as extreme rightists attacked the house of a group of Pakistani migrants in the western Athens suburb of Aigaleo, seriously injuring five. They reportedly broke windows and gained entry by kicking down a door, and then used clubs, crow-bars, and knives in the assault.⁴⁵ This was the fourth such attack on migrant housing in Athens in the fourth quarter of 2007.

There were also reports of violence based on religious intolerance. In one example:

- On February 20, 2007, in Menidi, Athens, vandals threw three Molotov cocktails at a Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Hall. A police investigation did not lead to any arrests.⁴⁶

Hungary

- On July 3, 2008, the “Magnum” gay sauna was targeted in the early morning hours. Four petrol bombs were thrown into the sauna. One man reported a slight injury due to smoke inhalation. According to reports, “the sauna had kept several extinguishers at hand since the previous week’s attack and so the fire was promptly extinguished.”⁴⁷
- In Budapest, on June 27, 2008 at 3 a.m., unknown perpetrators threw a petrol bomb at the “Action” gay bar. The front room of this small bar quickly went into flames. Nobody was injured. The police department was reportedly investigating this incident as an act of vandalism. Several LGBT rights organizations, including the Patent Association, declared that the fire should be investigated as an act of attempted murder.⁴⁸
- In September, vandals in Godollo, outside Budapest, sprayed antisemitic slogans on a Hungarian memorial to the Holocaust; the train carriage established as a mobile memorial in April 2006 had been on display throughout Hungary.⁴⁹

Ireland

Immigrants who are members of visible majorities were among those subjected to persistent hate crime violence. In March 2008, Ireland’s National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) said that “the number of reported assaults, cases of harassment and other types of abuse” in 2007 had risen to 99, compared to a 2006 figure of 65. The

report said that “the most significant victims of racist incidents were black African males,” with others targeted including people of Asian origin and members of the Traveller community. Half of the incidents were reported in the Dublin area.⁵⁰

In March 2008, the findings were reported of a first-ever study conducted by Ireland’s national police, the *Gardai*, into the attitudes of Roma and Travellers and ethnic minorities towards the force. The study found that members of ethnic minorities were almost twice as likely to have been victims of crime as others. Some 20 percent of people from ethnic minorities said they, or a member of their household, had been a victim of crime in 2006—in contrast to 10 percent of the general population. One-third of those surveyed said they had been the victim of a racist incident during the same time period. Forty-four percent of Travellers reported having been the victims of racial abuse, while 34 percent of people of African origin surveyed reported having been the victim of a racist incident.⁵¹

Some violent incidents in 2008 included the following:

- On June 4, 2008, 27-year-old Stephen Scott was attacked in Newtownabbey. Three youths knocked him to the ground and continued kicking and punching him as they shouted homophobic insults. Scott was treated in the hospital for a head injury, a leg injury and broken ribs. He stated afterwards about the homophobic attack: “It [was] enough to take a life—there were three of them on me and I was left for dead.”⁵²
- On March 14, 2008, in Dublin, a group of youths— young men and women—attacked Cida Jeangros, a 30-year-old Brazilian woman, as she walked to her home. The victim was subjected to verbal abuse, beaten with fists, knocked to the ground, and kicked, avoiding more serious injury by running away. There was no effort to rob her of her belongings—the intent appeared simply to do harm. Jeangros said she had previously been subjected

to verbal abuse, and that many migrant workers live in fear of attacks in Dublin.⁵³

- On February 22, 2008, in the Dublin suburb of Drimnagh, Polish migrant workers Marius Szwajkos and Pawel Kalite were attacked and killed by a group of youths, suffering lethal stab wounds in the head and throat.⁵⁴ Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, who was on a state visit to Poland at the time of the killings, called the killings a result of “hooliganism,” while the families of the victims said it would probably “never be known” if they were motivated by racism. A 17-year-old and a 19-year-old were charged in relation to the two murders.⁵⁵

Italy

- In June 2008, two hand-made bombs were thrown at the Islamic Center in Milan, damaging the main gate. This was the second such attack in less than two weeks. No arrests were reported in the immediate aftermath of the incident.⁵⁶
- In early May 2008, following claims that a Roma teenager had attempted to kidnap a child, mobs in several areas around Naples attacked Roma communities, setting houses alight, and forcing hundreds of Roma to flee. Others were escorted out of the camps by authorities, with no prospect of return.⁵⁷ On May 11, 2008, attackers set fires with Molotov cocktails in a Roma camp in via Novara, Milan.⁵⁸ On May 13, a mob threw stones and Molotov cocktails in an attack on two Roma squatter camps in the Ponticelli district of northern Naples; many of the estimated 800 inhabitants fled. On May 14, attackers returned, including scores of young men on motor scooters, armed with iron bars and Molotov cocktails. They moved systematically through the area, burning the camp to the ground. According to press reports, local residents stood by applauding the arsonists and a police presence there did nothing to challenge the

attackers.⁵⁹ Other arson attacks followed. On June 9, according to local monitors, “a settlement of approximately 100 Romanian Roma in Catania, Sicily, was attacked and burned to the ground by unknown perpetrators.”⁶⁰

- There were a number of backlash incidents against Roma following the brutal murder of Giovanna Reggiani that was attributed to a Romanian Roma in October 2007, including a November 2, 2007 attack on Roma living in improvised shelters in a parking lot near the scene of the murder. The up to eight attackers seriously injured three Romanians with metal bars and knives; one of the injured had deep stab wounds in his back. Another squatter camp in the area in which the attack occurred, housing some 50 to 60 Roma, was bulldozed by city authorities on November 3, 2007.⁶¹
- On October 24, 2007, a masked man on a motorcycle reportedly threw a firebomb into the courtyard of the Alif Baa Islamic Centre, in Abbiategrosso, near Milan, although no major damage or injuries were reported. The center had experienced similar attacks earlier in 2007, on July 25 and August 10. This was reportedly the eighth assault against Islamic centers in the region of Lombardy in recent months. On August 5, 2007 a mosque in the nearby city of Segrate was attacked and the imam’s car was destroyed.⁶²

Kyrgyzstan

- On November 26, 2007, around 10 p.m., a transgender male was attacked in the streets of Kyrgyzstan’s capital, Bishkek. Kyrgyzstan’s LGBT advocacy group Labrys reported on the incident, in which the victim recounted that two drunken men approached him and began to harass and threaten him. The victim went into a nearby supermarket to ask a security guard for assistance. The men followed him into the shop and the guard refused to

help. The assaulters continued to follow the victim through the streets, shouting obscenities and grabbing him. The victim was eventually able to escape. Labrys said that “this situation is unfortunately very common for many LGBT people in Kyrgyzstan.”⁶³

Latvia

In Latvia, despite official denials that violent hate crimes constitute a problem, anti-immigrant discourse has been accompanied by racist attacks on immigrants who are also “visible minorities.” A major concern, identified by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in a 2007 report, is “the widespread denial of the problem of racist violence both on the part of the public and the authorities.” Latvian authorities “tend to remain indifferent and/or undermine the problem by speaking of “isolated cases” without really recognizing, or being aware of, the real number of violent manifestations of intolerance in the country.”⁶⁴

Although Latvia now has provisions in law providing for more serious sentences for crimes motivated by bias, there is little evidence that these are being applied with vigor. In June 2007, in Riga, the capital, a court convicted two men characterized as neo-Nazis for attacking a Brazilian woman with a bottle while shouting “Go home!” However, their three- and two-year sentences were suspended.⁶⁵

One documented incident of vandalism included the following:

- In Daugavpils, vandals on February 2, 2007 threw a large stone through a window of a synagogue that opened there in 2006.⁶⁶

Lithuania

- In Vilnius, a new Jewish cemetery was repeatedly vandalized during its first year, even as a development project moved forward on the site of the 600-

year-old Snipiskes Jewish cemetery that was partially built over in Soviet times. In one incident on March 11, 2007, 12 tombstones were smashed at the new cemetery, in an incident Vilnius Chief Rabbi Haim Burstein said that was tied to continuing protests by the Jewish community over the development project.⁶⁷

Moldova

- In April 2007, a woman guard witnessed the daylight desecration of the Jewish cemetery in the capital Chisinau by five young people. In the aftermath of the incident, the guard was herself beaten by the father of one the perpetrators. Police said they had initiated an investigation.⁶⁸

Netherlands

- In January 2007, Holocaust memorials in the town of Smallerland, Drachten and at Ingenieur Menkdaan in Soest were reported vandalized, after repeated previous attacks.⁶⁹

Norway

- In Asker, on July 18, 2008, a gunman repeatedly fired at an accommodation center for asylum seekers, which houses fifteen- to eighteen-year-old youths. A 16-year-old Somali refugee was severely wounded in the shooting.⁷⁰

Poland

- Vandals desecrated a grave in the Jewish cemetery of Suwalki with a swastika on November 19, 2007.⁷¹
- In October 2007, Rabbi Icchak Rapaport was subjected by a young man to a ten-minute harangue of antisemitic insults and threats to his life as he travelled on a train between Wroclaw and Warsaw. Rabbi Rapaport reportedly remained calm

until the young man left of his own accord. In reporting the incident, he noted that although the situation appeared extremely serious, “The worst thing was that there were a lot of people around and no one reacted.”⁷²

- In August 2007, vandals at the Jewish Cemetery in Czeszochowa daubed some 100 tombstones with antisemitic graffiti. Police said a criminal investigation had been opened.⁷³
- In March 2007, in Swidnin, in the third such incident since 2003, vandals desecrated a small Jewish cemetery, knocking over or smashing half of the 20 tombstones.⁷⁴

Portugal

- In February 2008, a transgender woman was murdered and her body was placed in a rubble dumpster in Lisbon. The victim, Luna, was 42 years old, partially deaf, and of Brazilian origin. “Luna was a woman who fought against many obstacles and died the victim of great violence, possibly fed by hatred, prejudice and ignorance. Her body was left in a dumpster, hidden by rubble and dust, as if it was garbage, as if her life had not been worth living.”⁷⁵
- On September 26, 2007, vandals spray-painted 12 gravestones in a Lisbon Jewish cemetery with swastikas and antisemitic epithets and disturbed a fresh grave that had no marker.⁷⁶

Romania

- Vandals on February 10 and 11, 2007 desecrated dozens of tombstones and graves at the Cimitirul Mozaic Jewish cemetery in Bucharest.⁷⁷

Russian Federation

The number of violent hate crimes against individuals in Russia continues to grow steadily, with 2008 on track to be another record-setting year. According to the leading nongovernmental monitor, in 2007 there were at least 667 victims of racially motivated violence, including 86 murders. The beginning of 2008 has shown an increase in the most violent hate crimes. Already in the first eight months of 2008, 65 people were killed as a result of racial and other bias-motivated assaults.

NGO monitors remain the most reliable source of information for tracking individual cases and detecting year-on-year trends. In the Russian Interior Ministry’s annual figures on crimes, there is no separate reporting on crimes carried out with a bias motivation. There is no official data that tracks the response of police to crimes with a suspected bias motivation or the disposition of hate crime cases prosecuted in the courts. Nor is there much data on this from NGO monitors. Furthermore, widespread underreporting by hate crime victims calls into question the extent to which official monitoring could capture the true extent of the problem.

Bias-motivated violence is directed against all non-Slavic members of Russian society—citizens and noncitizens alike—as well as defenders of hate crime victims. In recent years there has been a sharp increase in violence against migrants from the countries of the former Soviet Union. Migrant workers from Central Asian countries are extremely vulnerable to attacks; since many of them arrive in Russia without proper documents, they risk deportation if they report crimes committed against them to the police. Immigrants and visitors from Africa and Asia have likewise been common targets of neo-Nazi violence. Jews, Muslims, Roma, as well as human rights and gay rights activists have also been victims of brutal bias-motivated assaults.

Though political leaders have begun to recognize the problem posed by neo-Nazi violence, their calls for action have only slowly trickled down through law enforcement structures. Although there had been a steady increase between 2004–2006 in the extent to which hate crimes had been recognized and prosecuted as such, 2007 marked a step back in that respect. In general, the number of prosecutions pale in comparison to the increasing frequency with which the crimes are being committed. Antiextremist legislation, of which penalty enhancement provisions in cases of hate crimes are a subset, has also been misused to target human rights activists and others who are critical of the government.

In 2007, several defendants suspected of racially motivated violence stood trial. While there have been convictions in some of these cases, observers reported that the racist and other bias motives of violent hate crimes are often not pursued by prosecutors or are disregarded by the courts, especially in less serious attacks. More frequently, charges under provisions on hooliganism or other common offenses are brought, even in cases where there appears to be evidence of a racist motive.

The year 2007 also saw several parallel legislative initiatives that resulted in the adoption of new and amended provisions to deal with violent hate crimes. In May and August 2007, a number of articles of the criminal code were amended to allow for enhanced penalties when the crime was motivated by “ideological” or “political” biases as well as because of a victim’s social group. Russian law had previously addressed bias motivations based only on “national, racial and religious hatred.” Observers fear that the amendments may be used to squelch legitimate political dissent.

Serbia

- In Belgrade, on the night of August 16, 2007, three men armed with chains attacked Femija Bajrami, a

45-year-old Roma man, knocking him to the ground and beating him. Bajrami, a resident of the suburb Zemun, required medical attention. Roma community members in Zemun told the media that anti-Roma assaults were frequent, and Serbian radio station *B92* said that Belgrade police had recorded five attacks on Roma in the first two weeks of August alone.⁷⁸

- On the night of August 10, 2007, at least five young men went to a park in New Belgrade, where they shouted insults at Roma living there, and set fire to a nylon sheet covering the hut of a Roma woman. The victims confronted the attackers, and a Roma woman was reportedly seriously injured in the ensuing fight. Radio *B92* reported on August 17 that police had identified five of the attackers, including a minor, and were filing charges of “inflicting grievous bodily harm and inciting ethnic, racial and religious hatred and intolerance.”⁷⁹
- On March 28, 2007 a resident of Stari Banovci held two Jehovah’s Witness missionaries, Austrian Wolfgang Hrdina and United States citizen Christopher Kunicki, at gunpoint in his house during a 45 minute harangue in which he threatened and insulted them. The same individual smashed the windshield of car of Hrdina’s car and then physically assaulted him on April 10, beating him about the head and kicking him until passersby came to his aid.⁸⁰
- Vandals sprayed a swastika on the façade of the Novi Sad synagogue on March 17, 2007.⁸¹
- Muamer Zukorlić, the leader of Serbia’s Muslim community, reported five death threats between December 2006 and March 2007. Zukurlic opted to hire a private bodyguard, because he could not reportedly get adequate police protection at the time.⁸²

Kosovo⁸³

- In Leposavic, a largely ethnic Serb community, on April 27, 2008, unknown attackers threw an explosive device believed to be a grenade in the city center. Three people were wounded and required hospitalization. The attack occurred just hours before the beginning of the celebration of Orthodox Easter.⁸⁴
- On January 1, 2008, eight homes belonging to Serbs were attacked in the divided Kosovo town Mitrovica; one was set alight and largely destroyed while the others were the object of stone throwing in what appeared to be a coordinated attack. There were no reported arrests.⁸⁵
- On December 24, 2007, in the predominantly Albanian Obilic municipality, an unknown attacker threw what appeared to be a hand grenade into an apartment owned by a Kosovo Serb. The explosive broke windows but the owner, who was in bed at the time, was unharmed.⁸⁶
- On August 17, 2007, vandals defaced the cross on the gate of the Orthodox church at Gjilan/Gnjilane, and wrote racist slogans on its walls, including “Death for all Serbs.”⁸⁷
- In the village of Koretin, on December 2, 2007, two ethnic Albanian men reportedly threw stones at a car driven by ethnic Serbs, smashing glass and resulting in minor injuries to one passenger. Two men were arrested on unspecified charges.⁸⁸

Slovakia

- In May 2007, in Záhorská Ves, five masked men dressed in black like police commandos attacked the Romani Sarközy family in a makeshift shelter at the site of the family compound that was destroyed in a similar attack in 2003. The attackers reportedly beat members of the family, including a mother and child, with wooden clubs and iron rods, and destroyed all of their furniture. The attackers reportedly shouted “Gypsies, get up.”⁸⁹ The two families had reportedly lived on the village site for over one hundred years.⁹⁰
- In Kosice, on November 21, 2007, three men shouting Nazi slogans reportedly attacked a 16-year-old girl whose father is Cuban, shouting “get out of Slovakia!” The girl, who was described as “dark-skinned,” suffered injuries to her head, back, and right arm. A police spokeswoman said “First they knocked the girl down to the ground. Then all the three started kicking and beating her up, shouting ‘Sieg heil’ and ‘clear off Slovakia’ at her.” A 19-year-old suspect was detained and apparently under investigation for the crimes of “bodily harm and support and promotion of groups suppressing the fundamental rights and freedoms.”⁹¹

Spain

There continues to be a serious lack of official data collection on hate crimes and racist violence in Spain. The nonprofit organization Movement Against Intolerance produces annual reports, exposing hundreds of incidents throughout the Spanish provinces. Esteban Ibarra, the president of organization, voiced concerns over the marginalization of the problem by the authorities. “We believe that there are 4,000 hate crimes each year in Spain. This contrasts with the official line, which does not deny the problem, but says it is very small,” said Ibarra, calling for the establishment of the office of a “special prosecutor dedicated to racism and xenophobia.”⁹²

According to reporting by the organization, the regions most affected were Andalucía, Cataluña, Castilla y Leon, Murcia, Madrid, and Valencia. The victims tend to be migrants (mainly from the Magreb, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America), the Roma, as well as LGBT persons. Religious buildings such as mosques and synagogues have also been targeted.

On October 8, 2007, police in the province of Cataluña arrested five people belonging to a neo-Nazi group. These individuals were believed to have participated in a series of violent attacks in the district of Sants-Montjuïc in Barcelona, among them the following:

- On July 21, 2007, two men and one woman attacked a young man, stabbing him three times in Plaza España. The motivation for the attack is unknown but after fleeing the scene the aggressors apparently screamed slogans like “heil Hitler” and raised their arms in the Nazi salute. The alleged suspects were arrested and charged with attempted murder.
- The second attack—against two young men—occurred during an annual festival on August 24, 2007. Police officials arrested two minors, placing them under supervised probation and detention pending trial.⁹³

Other cases of racist violence included the following:

- On October 7, 2007, an instance of xenophobic violence was caught on a security camera at a local metro train in Barcelona. A 21-year-old Spaniard harassed a 16-year-old Ecuadorian girl sitting in the neighboring seat. The camera recorded him punching the girl in the face, grabbing her breast, and kicking her in the neck and face. He was heard shouting racial and anti-immigrant slurs directed against the victim. The suspect was arrested later that month and was charged with an offense against moral integrity and assault.⁹⁴
- On February 10, 2007, Miwa Buene Monake, a 42-year-old Congolese immigrant, suffered a brutally violent racist attack in the streets of Madrid, fracturing three vertebrae. After spending seventeen days in a coma, Monake found himself paralyzed from the neck down.⁹⁵

Sweden

- On July 27, 2008, two gay men, aged 25 and 30, were attacked by three men at a park in Stockholm. Allegedly, the couple was stopped after the attackers saw them kissing. The attackers asked for directions then asked about the couple’s sexuality. The three offenders drew knives and robbed them of mobile phones and money. They then stabbed one man in his stomach, resulting in a serious injury. Police were reportedly investigating this attack as a hate crime due to hostile slurs and the unprovoked stabbing of one of the gay men. However, no arrests were made by the end of July 2008.⁹⁶

Switzerland

- On January 22 and June 3, 2007, unidentified attackers threw Molotov cocktails at a center for asylum seekers in Birr. On March 4, 2007, in Langendorf, two men were seen driving slowly past a center for asylum seekers shortly after midnight. The same vehicle returned shortly afterward and one of its passengers was seen to fire shots at the building.⁹⁷
- On May 1, 2007, in a Zurich suburb, unknown men shouting obscenities about Africans attacked Antonio da Costa, a 43-year-old refugee from Angola. The attackers used chainsaws to rake da Costa’s face, neck, and chest, nearly severed his left thumb, and severely slashed one arm; he required six hours of emergency surgery. There were reportedly no arrests, although a prosecutor said video surveillance footage was being used in the investigation.⁹⁸
- Shortly after midnight on May 27, 2007, in Fällanden, two young men—aged 16 and 20—threw an incendiary device against the wall of a building housing asylum seekers. The fire was put out by

residents. The following night, the two assailants returned and threw two Molotov cocktails at the building. The attackers were detained several weeks after the attacks and confessed to having intended to “frighten the residents.”⁹⁹

- On May 24, 2007, arsonists set alight Geneva’s modern Hekhal Haness synagogue, seriously damaging the building.¹⁰⁰ A Swiss magistrate charged with the investigation said on June 1 that “the cause of the fire was criminal,” but said there had been “no indication” that it was set by extremists.¹⁰¹
- In Thun, on January 28, 2007 six skinheads assaulted and injured three young people, including a 22-year-old Swiss citizen of African origin, who was told that he had no business being in Switzerland. Police arrived but made no arrests at that time; in April, 2008, a 23-year-old with a record of political extremism was fined for involvement in the attack.¹⁰²

Turkey

- In July 2008, 26-year-old gay man, Ahmet Yıldız, was shot leaving a cafe in Istanbul. He died shortly after being brought to a local hospital. Sedef Cakmak, an activist for Lambda Istanbul and friend of Mr. Yıldız expressed following the incident: “I feel helpless: we are trying to raise awareness of gay rights in this country, but the more visible we become, the more we open ourselves up to this sort of attack.”¹⁰³
- On April 18, 2007, in Malatya, a group of young men claiming to be defending Islam and Turkish nationalism bound, tortured, and killed Necati Aydın, Uğur Yüksel, and Tillman Geske—who were employees of a Christian publishing house.¹⁰⁴

Ukraine

Racial and other bias motivated violent crimes are dramatically on the rise in Ukraine. Individuals of non-European origin, immigrants and minorities are most vulnerable to violent attacks, many of which occur in broad daylight. Sizeable Jewish communities and the predominantly Muslim Crimean Tatars are among the targets of bias-motivated crimes. Several Jewish religious leaders have been violently assaulted, and attacks on property and places of worship are commonplace. The Ukrainian Roma communities have been the victims of mob violence in the past. A burgeoning movement of skinheads continues to be responsible for the most violent hate crimes.

Although monitoring efforts by civil society organizations are limited and mainly focus on the largest metropolitan areas, at least 86 attacks with a suspected bias motivation were reported by nongovernmental monitors in 2007, including 5 murders. In the first six months of 2008, there were at least 4 murders of foreigners and numerous serious attacks in which there was a suspected racist or other bias motivation. There were undoubtedly many other violent incidents that went unreported and/or undocumented. The government does not currently collect statistics or publicly report on violent hate crimes. Incidents, when they are reported, are most often registered as hooliganism rather than as bias-motivated crimes.

The government’s response to the rise in hate crimes has been insufficient and inconsistent. A small group of politicians, including President Yushchenko, has spoken out against racist and xenophobic violence. However, these statements have been undermined by the rhetoric of other key law enforcement officials whose remarks have suggested a denial of the problem.

Nonetheless, the Ukrainian authorities did take several steps in 2007: the Interior Ministry adopted an action plan on combating racism and created a special unit

that deals with ethnic crimes; the State Security Service created a special unit on combating xenophobia and intolerance; and the Foreign Ministry appointed a special envoy to address racism, xenophobia, and discrimination. In April 2008, an interministerial commission was created and its plan to combat xenophobia was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in August 2008.

In early 2008 there were unprecedented guilty verdicts handed down in three cases of violence in which incitement to racial and ethnic hatred were among the charges. However, these verdicts were exceptions to a pattern in which violent crimes with an apparent bias motivation are more often treated as minor offenses. Law enforcement officials lack training and experience in recognizing and recording the bias motivations behind attacks, limiting the ability of prosecutors to pursue hate crime cases in court. Many instances of violence with a suspected racial motivation go unreported, as many victims fear harassment by law enforcement officials, among other factors.

An inadequate legal framework also hinders the ability of criminal justice officials to prosecute hate crimes as such. In 2008, there were several proposed packages of amendments to the criminal legislation dealing with incitement and violent hate crimes, yet none of the introduced bills fully addressed the weaknesses in the current legislation.

Human Rights First has made a number of concrete recommendations to the Ukrainian authorities for addressing the problem of violent hate crimes in 2008, calling for the following steps to be taken:

- A public commitment by law-enforcement agencies to vigorously investigate violent crimes with a suspected racial or other bias motivation.
- The development of clear guidelines mandating police officers and investigators to record bias motives in the commission of a crime.

- Concrete steps by law enforcement officials—including reaching out to community and other nongovernmental groups—to increase the confidence of hate crime victims to report crimes to the police.

United Kingdom

Violent hate crimes, many of which result in serious injuries or deaths, are on the rise. According to Home Office reports, in 2006/2007, 61,262 racist incidents were reported to the police, an increase of 3.7 percent over the previous year and a 28 percent increase over the past five years. Among these, there were 42,551 racially or religiously aggravated offences in 2006/2007, representing a 2.6 percent increase over the previous year. Approximately half of the police forces in England and Wales reported an increase in racially and religiously motivated incidents. Over a three-year period ending in 2006/2007 the government reported twenty-three racially motivated homicides.¹⁰⁵ In Scotland and Northern Ireland, attacks on new immigrants from within the expanded European Union continued to be reported at a high rate.

The United Kingdom has among the most comprehensive systems of hate crime data collection in Europe and is the only country to report on incidents (acts which may fall short of criminal offenses) as well as offenses. In 2006/2007, 61,262 racist incidents were reported to the police in England and Wales, an increase of 3.7 percent over the previous year. Among these, there were 42,551 racially or religiously aggravated offences, representing a 2.6 percent increase in the number of offenses over the previous year. Just over half of all forces recorded an increase in the number of racially or religiously aggravated offences.¹⁰⁶

In Scotland, there were 1,022 incidents of racist violence in Lothian and the Borders regions in

2006/2007, twice the 2002/2003 number.¹⁰⁷ In Strathclyde, police reported 1,853 hate crimes during the 2006/2007 year, a 7.5 percent rise over the previous year, and an almost 20 percent rise over 2002/2003 levels.¹⁰⁸

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), in its report on hate crimes in 2007-2008, reported a slight decline in racist incidents and crimes, from 1,047 incidents and 861 crimes in 2006-2007 to 976 incidents and 757 crimes in 2007-2008. A separate category for “sectarian” incidents showed a similar decline, from 1,695 incidents and 1,217 crimes to 1,584 incidents and 1,056 crimes. Homophobic incidents rose slightly, from 155 to 160 in 2007-2008 while crimes dropped from 117 to 114; in a further category of “transphobic” bias motivations, incidents registered dropped from 32 to 7 and crimes from 14 to 4. Faith/religion incidents dropped from 136 to 68 as did crimes, from 120 to 62). Northern Ireland statistics also covered disability bias, recording a rise from 48 to 49 disability-bias incidents and a 62 percent rise in the number of crimes, from 26 to 42.¹⁰⁹

Among the many incidents of racist and xenophobic violence include the following:

- In August 2007, in Wrexham, Wales, Adam Michalski, a Polish migrant worker was stabbed to death with a carving knife by 25-year-old Thomas Blue, who was tried and convicted for the killing. According to the judge, the trouble first started when the perpetrator “shouted racist abuse at Adam Michalski, because of his country of origin.” The judge, in sentencing the perpetrator to life in prison (with a minimum 17 year prison sentence), said he was satisfied that the racist motivation was proven in court and was considered during the sentencing.¹¹⁰
- In Scotland, on September 10, 2007, a 32-year-old woman attacked 17-year-old Tarik Husan, an Asian teenager while he was standing at a bus

stop. As she stabbed him in the chest and arm, the woman yelled “You’re all terrorists!” In the court case that followed, the presiding judge called the attack “completely unprovoked ... on an unarmed stranger in the public street without any explainable motive” and sentenced the perpetrator to six years in prison.¹¹¹

- On December 21, 2007 in Bolton, Greater Manchester, a 28-year-old British Asian man, Asaf Mahmood Ahmed, was found dead as a result of severe head injuries. Ahmed was assaulted on the way to a local store in the evening. Witnesses heard “comments and language,” which led officers to treat the case as a racially motivated attack. Eighteen-year-old Jason Bolton and an unnamed fifteen-year-old boy have been charged with murder.¹¹²

The problem of antisemitism remains acute in the United Kingdom, despite considerable efforts by national and local authorities to combat it. Jewish communities continued to struggle with everyday antisemitic harassment and violence. Many synagogues, Jewish schools, and Jewish institutions required police protection and surveillance. The Community Security Trust’s annual survey of antisemitism found 2007 to have been the worst year on record for violent assaults since monitoring began in 1984, with a 2 percent rise over the previous record-high level reported in 2006. It was the second worst year, after 2006, for incidents overall, with 547 registered, 47 fewer than the previous year. One particularly brutal case of antisemitic violence was the following:

- On June 15, 2008 in North London, a fifteen-year-old Jewish boy was attacked and beaten unconscious by a gang of up to eight youths aged between ten and fourteen. The gang beat the young victim leaving him unconscious on the pavement, with severe facial bruises and requiring hospitaliza-

tion. They stole religious clothing he was wearing. The police are treating the case as a racist crime.¹¹³

Other minority communities have also expressed concern about their safety. Inayat Bunglawala, spokesman for the Muslim Council of Britain, confirmed incidents of attacks against mosques and Islamic schools and noted that more British Muslims consider anti-Muslim prejudice to be increasing. Britain's first Muslim minister, Shahid Malik, criticized what he described as growing hostility to Muslims in the United Kingdom.¹¹⁴

A nongovernmental national survey of homophobic crime found that members of the LGBT community reported that they were often the victims of crimes ranging from insults and harassment to sexual and physical assault. Nearly 20 percent of the 1721 LGBT persons surveyed had experienced a homophobic hate crime or incident in the last three years. Three quarters of the victims did not report to the police, believing that the incidents would not be investigated, while two thirds of the victims who sought police protection and attention were not referred to support services or offered advice.¹¹⁵

Similar shortcomings lead to deficiencies in addressing hate crimes committed against people with disabilities. According to Anne Novis, co-chair of the Metropolitan Police independent advisory group on disability, "even when disabled people report crimes, they are not being correctly reported or recognized." Novis cited a personal example of police indifference and misapprehension: after being insulted, taunted, and threatened by a group of youths, Novis reported the incident to the police, which refused to investigate the case because she was not physically harmed. However, there have been promising signs of improvement, as it appears that police started to realize that there has been "massive under-reporting of the issue." According to Assistant Chief Constable Drew Harris, who presented evidence to a parliamentary group considering hate crimes against

the disabled, real levels might be a "many one hundredfold" more than what police are currently registering.¹¹⁶

In addition to physical attacks against individuals, bias-motivated incidents have included destruction of property:

- On Friday, June 27, 2008, in Coleraine, Northern Ireland, Michael Sotirov, an ethnic Bulgarian, was the victim of arson. It was the third attack on his businesses; his home was targeted in an arson attack a month earlier. Police suspect the crime was motivated by hatred.¹¹⁷
- Eleven Jewish headstones were daubed with swastikas at a Jewish cemetery in Surrey. In Yorkshire, sixty headstones were damaged at a Jewish cemetery in two separate incidents.¹¹⁸

The government of the United Kingdom is implementing a range of policies to combat hate crimes in the country, in particular to improve reporting and monitoring systems as well as the criminal justice response to hate crimes.

Several overlapping systems of monitoring and reporting currently allow for some level of understanding of the extent of the hate crime problem in the United Kingdom and demonstrate the government's commitment to addressing the problem. At the same time, the Justice Ministry reports that "as with most crime, the majority of racial incidents are not reported to the police."¹¹⁹ This challenge remains despite considerable efforts of the British police, which allocate a substantial amount of resources to the issue of hate crimes.

United States

Across the United States in 2007 and 2008, people motivated by prejudice acted violently to hurt individuals in vicious assaults, to damage homes and personal property, and to attack places of worship, cemeteries, community centers, and schools. The prejudices differ

from case to case, and often multiple prejudices combine in a single crime.

According to statistics published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for 2006, the latest year for which information is available, people of African descent comprised the largest number of victims of violent hate crime, reflecting longstanding patterns of such crimes in the United States. However, new trends of rising anti-immigrant violence were also part of the larger pattern of racism and xenophobia: anti-immigrant hate crimes took the form of personal assaults leading to serious injury or death, as well as threatening graffiti on homes and businesses. In these new patterns of violence, people of Hispanic origin, both immigrants and American citizens, faced rising levels of crime driven by prejudice and hatred.

Jews continue to be among the principal victims of racism combined with religious hatred and prejudice, with antisemitic crimes continuing at high levels. Antisemitic crimes ranged from attacks on synagogues and schools and vandalism of homes to physical assaults on religious and community leaders.

Racism and religious bias also conspired to drive attacks on people of Muslim origin, with arson attacks on mosques and Islamic community centers, and attacks on ordinary citizens and immigrants who happen to be Muslims. These hate crimes placed people of Middle East and South Asian origins under threat whether or not they were Muslims, even as Muslims faced the double discrimination of racism and religious prejudice. Perpetrators of religious bias crimes also targeted Christian churches, their congregations, and clergy for crimes ranging from threatening graffiti to arson and deadly gunfire.

FBI hate crime data shows that attacks founded on sexual orientation continue to be characterized by a high level of violence, with a higher proportion of personal assaults than in other categories of hate crime. Nongovernmental monitors report a substantial increase

in 2007 of violent attacks on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. Some of those attacked faced serious injury or death.

People with disabilities were targeted for ongoing abuse, torture, and murder. The number of attacks against disabled people is generally understood to be severely undercounted.

The perpetrators of the violence were motivated by views founded on prejudice and hatred—but the resulting hate crimes were objective acts of violence that would have constituted punishable offenses regardless of motivation. Bias-motivated incidents were *more serious* crimes because they represented criminal acts with greater resonance, reach, and consequences than most ordinary crimes—because they threatened and harmed not just the individual victims and their families but whole sectors of the population and the social fabric itself.

Although hate crimes are a serious and continuing problem in the United States, the situation in the U.S. differs in significant ways from that in most of the other 56 participating states in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)—the region of focus of Human Rights First's *2008 Hate Crime Survey*. Unlike in most other countries, the government of the United States has generally responded to hate crimes vigorously, in rhetoric and in action, putting in place a robust system of monitoring and reporting, as well as creating a sound legal base for prosecuting hate crimes as the more serious crimes that they are.

Nonetheless, there are some glaring omissions in the official response to hate crimes, and this report concludes with several recommendations to enhance that response. In particular, the adoption of the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crime Prevention Act would address some of the principle shortcomings on the current hate crime legislation.

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