Number of anti-Semitic hate crimes edged up last year, FBI reports

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<https://www.jta.org/2017/11/13/news-opinion/united-states/number-of-anti-semitic-hate-crimes-edged-up-last-year-fbi-reports>

The number of anti-Semitic hate crimes in the United States rose slightly in 2016 compared to the previous year, according to FBI statistics.

The data released Monday by the federal law enforcement agency [show](https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016/tables/table-1) there were 684 anti-Semitic hate crime incidents last year, a 3 percent increase from the 664 [recorded](https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015/tables-and-data-declarations/1tabledatadecpdf) by the FBI in 2015.

Overall, there were more than 6,100 hate crimes last year, up about 5 percent percent from the previous year. In both years, anti-Semitic incidents accounted for just over half of religious hate crimes and about 11 percent of hate crimes of all types.

Muslims were the second-most common targets of religious hate crimes in 2016 with 307 anti-Islamic incidents.

African-Americans were far and away the main target of hate crimes in general, targeted in 1,739 incidents, accounting for more than half of racially motivated hate crimes and about 28 percent of the total.

For the purpose of collecting statistics, the FBI [defines](https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/hate-crimes) a hate crime as a “criminal offense that involves bias against against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity.” The definition can include everything from vandalism to murder.

In a statement addressing the report Monday, the Anti-Defamation League focused on the overall increase in reported hate crimes. It expressed “disappointment” at the trend and also pointed to a lack of voluntary reporting by police agencies around the country, saying that “nearly 90 cities” with more than 100,000 residents either reported no hate crimes or did not respond to the FBI’s request for data.

“There’s a dangerous disconnect between the rising problem of hate crimes and the lack of credible data being reported,” ADL National Director Jonathan Greenblatt said. “Police departments that do not report credible data to the FBI risk sending the message that this is not a priority issue for them, which may threaten community trust in their ability and readiness to address hate violence.”

However, the FBI statistics seem to belie a number of reports by the ADL and others that suggested a spike in anti-Semitism in the United States last year.

In April, the Anti-Defamation League [reported](https://www.jta.org/2017/04/24/news-opinion/united-states/anti-semitic-incidents-in-us-surging-in-17-rose-by-a-third-in-16) 1,266 anti-Semitic incidents in 2016, a 35 percent increase from 2015. The report included a rash of bomb threats against Jewish community centers across the country that were later traced to a teenager in Israel.

Earlier this month, the ADL [said](https://www.jta.org/2017/11/02/news-opinion/united-states/anti-semitic-incidents-surge-in-united-states-adl-says) the first nine months of 2017 saw a 67 percent increase in anti-Semitic incidents compared to the same period of 2016. It identified the 2016 presidential elections, and particularly the divisive candidacy of President Donald Trump, as a cause of anti-Semitic acts.

“In the face of this latest news, we stand strong in our commitment to improving hate crime data collection, advocating for better hate crime legislation, and working closely with law enforcement on hate crime training,” Greenblatt said Monday. “We will not stop until everyone feels free from hate in their communities.”