

## **AN ESTIMATED 148,000 HATE CRIMES REPORTED IN 2009; MOST HATE CRIMES MOTIVATED BY RACIAL OR ETHNIC BIAS**

WASHINGTON – An estimated 148,400 hate crimes were reported to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) in 2009, a decline from 239,400 in 2003, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today.

Almost 90 percent of hate crimes were perceived to be motivated by racial or ethnic prejudice or both. In almost all hate crimes (98 percent), the offender used hate-related language against the victim.

Violent hate crime accounted for an annual average of 3.1 percent of all violent crime reported to the NCVS. The rate of violent hate crime declined from 0.8 victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older in 2003 to 0.5 victimizations per 1,000 persons in 2009.

Nearly 87 percent of all hate crimes involved violence, and about 23 percent were serious violent crimes (rape/sexual assault, robbery, or aggravated assault). In comparison, 23 percent of all nonhate crimes involved violence and 8 percent of nonhate crimes were serious violent crimes. Eight hate crime homicides (murders or non-negligent manslaughters) occurred in 2009.

The 1990 Hate Crimes Statistics Act defines bias or hate crimes as “crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.” The act has been amended twice—in 1994, to include crimes motivated by bias against persons with disabilities, and in late 2009 to include crimes based on gender or gender identity. Crimes motivated by gender or gender identity bias were outside the scope of the report.

About 30 percent of hate crime victims suspected they were targeted because of their ethnicity, and 25 percent suspected they were targeted because of their associations with people having certain characteristics. About 15 percent of victims suspected the offenders were motivated by bias against their sexual orientation; 13 percent suspected bias against their perceived characteristics; 12 percent suspected religious bias; and 10 percent suspected they were targeted because of a disability.

About 45 percent of all hate crimes were reported to the police. When the crime was not reported, 32 percent of victims said that they chose to deal with the incident in another way, 19

percent stated that the crime was not important enough to report, 19 percent stated that the police could not or would not do anything to help, and 31 percent stated another reason not to report the incident.

In more than half (54 percent) of hate crimes, the offender was a stranger to the victim. The offender had a weapon in about 20 percent of hate crimes, and the victim suffered a minor or serious injury in 23 percent of hate crimes. There was no difference between hate and nonhate crimes in the percentage of victimizations that involved a weapon or an injury.

The report, *Hate Crime, 2003-2009* (NCJ 234085), was written by BJS statisticians Lynn Langton and Michael Planty. Following publication, the report can be found at <http://www.bjs.gov>.

For additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical reports and programs, please visit the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov>.

###

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has seven components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; the Community Capacity Development Office; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.