

Violence Based on Racism and Xenophobia

Hate Crime Survey

- ◊ **Racist and xenophobic violence rose** in a number of countries throughout the region of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2007–2008.
 - Government monitoring systems in **Finland, Ireland, the Slovak Republic, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States** showed moderate to high rises in the overall numbers of hate crimes in 2006 and 2007—the latest figures available.
 - Between 2000 and 2006—**Denmark, Germany, France, Ireland, Slovakia, Finland, and the United Kingdom** experienced an upward trend in government-tracked racist crime.
 - Information from nongovernmental monitors provided evidence of rising levels of racist violence in 2007 in **Greece, Italy, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, and Ukraine**.

- ◊ **Monitoring and reporting** is inconsistent and insufficient. Available figures show only the tip of the iceberg.
 - Media and NGO surveys provided evidence of rising levels of racist violence in many countries, while noting that in many cases violence was not being reported to or reported by police.
 - Comprehensive and systematic data collection systems are unavailable in most OSCE states; government monitoring systems have been put in place in a small number of countries.

- ◊ **Racist violence** threatens communities distinguished by ethnic origin, including both national minorities and people of immigrant origin, citizens and non-citizens, long-time residents and newcomers.
 - People of **African origin** were subjected to some of the most persistent and serious attacks, and were among the principal victims of racist and xenophobic violence in both Europe and North America.
 - People of **Asian origin** faced high levels of racist violence, with the racism confronting people of South Asian origin often overlapping with and exacerbated by hatred and prejudice toward those of a Muslim background.
 - **Roma and Sinti** continued to be particular targets of discrimination and hate crime violence across Europe. Immigrant Roma within the expanded European Union faced extraordinary violence in 2007 and 2008.

- ◊ **Xenophobia** is quickly growing in Europe and North America, as the hatred and prejudice against the perceived “outsiders” intensifies. Immigrant groups are often made scapegoats for social ills ranging from crime to unemployment.
 - **Immigrants** and citizens of immigrant origin face particular threat of violence motivated by xenophobia throughout much of Europe and North America.
 - Anti-immigrant bias is a form of prejudice and hatred founded on **multiple forms of discrimination** that attacks physical appearance, religious affiliation, and the cultural characteristics of the victims.
 - **Refugees** and **asylum seekers**, especially those concentrated in small areas amidst largely homogenous populations, are particularly vulnerable to violent attacks.
 - New trends of internal immigration in the expanded **European Union** have led to an increase in anti-immigrant discourse and violence directed at people from within the **E.U.**
 - In the **United States**, recent debates on immigration have polarized society, contributing to a wave of xenophobia and violent assaults against people of **Hispanic origin**, both citizens and immigrants.
 - The symbols of German Nazism were used to send a message of hatred and exclusion to members of a broad range of religious and ethnic minorities, even as they retained their particular antisemitic significance when targeting Jewish families and communities.

- ◊ There is a need for immediate initiatives to fight violence based on racism and xenophobia. Human Rights First has recommended the implementation of our **Ten-Point Plan** to combat hate crime, which calls for:
 - **Vigorous law enforcement response to individual incidents;**
 - **Cooperation between the police and affected communities;**
 - **Systematic official monitoring, data collection, and public reporting.**

Human Rights First is a leading human rights advocacy organization based in New York City and Washington, D.C. Since 1978, we have worked in the United States and abroad to create a secure and humane world—advancing justice, human dignity, and respect for the rule of law. All of our activities are supported by private contributions. We accept no government funds. Since 2002, Human Rights First’s Fighting Discrimination Program has combated discrimination by seeking to reverse the tide of racist, antisemitic, anti-immigrant, and anti-Muslim violence and other bias crimes across the fifty-six countries of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Our 2008 Hate Crime Survey, available online, documented a rise in hate crimes across many parts of Europe and North America. Our web-based Hate Crime Report Card tracks official reporting systems as well as hate crime laws and their implementation in all fifty-six OSCE states.