

2019: The Year In Fascist & Far-Right Extremist Violence



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2019 was the third year that the Antifa International social media collective tried to document acts of violence committed by bigots, fascists, and the extreme right around the world. Over the last twelve months we've documented 570 violent incidents, including:

- 78 shootings
- 29 arsons
- 70 stabbings
- 304 beatings
- 16 bombings
- 20 vehicle attacks
- 3 kidnappings
- 2 acid attacks
- 3 scaldings
- 2 sexual assaults
- 43 foiled terrorist attacks

These attacks killed 372 people and injured 1151 others.

PARAMETERS

The two main parameters we had to contend with for this project were what would we consider to be “violence” and how we would decide if a violent act was motivated by bigotry, fascism, or far-right extremism.

We defined “violence” as any act that caused physical harm to a person; or any act in which included a credible threat of physical harm to a person; or any act in which it was likely that a person would suffer physical harm as a direct or indirect result (for example, an arson attack on an occupied building). This definition omitted acts of property damage and vandalism where people were not put into potential physical jeopardy as a result.

Determining which acts were motivated by the attacker's bigotry, fascism, or involvement in far-right extremism was not easy. We examined each case under the same lens - using the anti-fascist slogan “respect existence or expect resistance” as a guide, we tried to determine as accurately as possible whether the intended target's identity as part of, membership in, or activity in a group of people normally targeted by bigots, fascists, and the far right was the most likely motivation for the attack. Essentially, for each incident we asked ourselves if the victim(s) would have been targeted for attack if they did not belong to such a group. In some cases, we considered whether it was reasonable to conclude that the attacker's involvement in fascist/right-wing extremism would have led them to resort to violence instead of using other avenues that someone not involved in such extremism would have chosen - this was especially true for attacks against people close to the attacker (such as family members) or against other fascists.

It is important to note that we excluded violent hate crimes committed by state actors (such as military or law enforcement agencies) from our data set.

METHODOLOGY

We monitored reports of violent hate crimes in several countries. These reports came from the news media, advocacy organizations, and other sources. We compiled the reports into our chronology and map on a weekly basis. We'd like to acknowledge the value of the research compiled by groups such as ProPublica, the Human Rights Campaign, Tell Mama, Mut Gegen Rechte Gewalt, Bell Tower News, factchecker.in, the Never Again Association, Transgender Europe, and Luigi Mastrodonato, all of whom did outstanding work documenting violent hate crimes around the world that proved extremely helpful to our own research.

LIMITATIONS

This research, while likely the most comprehensive reporting of violent hate crimes in 2019, should not by any means be considered a complete listing of bigoted/fascist/far right violence. Instead, we believe it best serves as a sample of the level of violence committed nearly every single day last year.

Because our research collective is small, unfunded, and run entirely by volunteers, we were limited to what stories we could find being published by news media and by advocacy organizations, which means that our data does not capture violent hate crimes that were not reported by either. We were further limited in scope to sources in languages we understood, which means that although we've improved in this regard, we still failed to document violent hate crimes in whole regions and countries that we are unfamiliar with and do not know the language(s) of.

There is no doubt that the 570 incidents of bigoted, fascist, and extreme-right violence we managed to document in 2019 are only a fraction of the number of incidents that happen every day around the world. It's our hope that by documenting and describing what our resources and limitations allow us to, the urgency of responding to this issue will be impossible to ignore.

FINDINGS

We documented far more incidents of bigoted, fascist, and extreme-right violence than we did in the two years previous (we started this particular project in 2017) - 89% more incidents than 2018 and a nearly 400% increase over the number of incidents we recorded in 2017. All told, we documented more violent hate crimes in 2019 than we did in the previous two years combined.

Likewise the increase in the number of those killed and injured by bigoted, fascist, or extreme-right violence. Whether this increase is a reflection of growing violence or whether it is because our ability to find and document violent hate crimes globally has improved is difficult to determine.

Other findings from our research:

The most violent single hate crime occurred in April 2019, when a Sri Lankan fascist group connected to Daesh/ISIS led a series of coordinated terror attacks against Christians, killing dozens and injuring hundreds.

The group most likely to be targeted for hate-motivated violence in 2019 (after taking into account the April terror attacks against Christians in Sri Lanka) were Muslims, followed by migrants and refugees. Trans people experienced nearly the same number of violent incidents as LGB+ people but were the most likely to be murdered. Trans men and women were the victims in 23% of the bias-motivated murders we documented in 2019. Three out of every four violent attacks against a trans person that we documented this year was lethal.

The 35 violent incidents we documented in New York City earn it the title of 2019 Violent Hate Crime Capital of the World, with 6% of all violent hate crimes that we documented worldwide occurring in the Five Boroughs. These crimes

also give the Big Apple the title of the city with the 5th-most violent hate crimes per capita in 2019. As 74% of those attacks were against Jewish people, New York also appears to be the most dangerous city in the world for Jews, which just one neighbourhood (Brooklyn's Crown Heights) accounting for a third of all violent hate crimes in the city last year.

That said, Portland, OR. had the highest per-capita violent hate crime rate of any city in the world - nearly 4x higher than New York City's. Washington, DC had the 2nd-most violent hate crimes per capita, followed by Warsaw, Berlin, and New York City.

Bigoted, fascist, and extreme-right violence peaked in the period between April and August of 2019, when more than half of the incidents we documented occurred. Our research revealed this same pattern of violent incidents peaking between April and August of 2018.

CONCLUSION

It's entirely possible that our work documenting bigoted, fascist, and extreme-right violence in 2019 demonstrates a marked increase in violence and especially deadly violence last year. The first day of 2019 saw nine different attacks in five countries that left 13 people injured and one dead. Nearly twelve months later, five Jewish people were hacked with a machete at a Hanukkah. At a press conference, the daughter of one of the most-seriously injured in that attack begged all of us to "please stand up and stop this hatred ... all types of hatred against any race, religion, orientation, anything else."

As antifascists we will continue to expose, oppose, and confront fascists, using every means at our disposal to stop them, until the list of their victims drops to zero. Anti-fascism is self-defence and protecting our communities from fascist violence is why we fight.

In just three years, this research project has become the most globally-comprehensive documentation of violent hate crimes that exists (to our knowledge.) While other organizations that track hate crimes tend to cover just one country and wait until the end of the year to publish an annual report, we attempt to cover all countries and update our chronology and map in real time throughout the year, making our data the most up-to-date. But we can't sustain or expand this project without your support! We're raising funds so we can pay for the translation, research, analysis, writing, editing, and graphic design services we need to keep moving forward.

<https://antifainternational.tumblr.com/post/190098512734/2019-the-year-in-fascist-far-right-extremist>