# US sees a rise in homophobic hate crimes



Recent data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reveals a concerning increase in hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation and gender identity, even as the overall violent crime rate in the United States has decreased.

In 2023, the FBI reported a total of 2,936 incidents believed to be motivated by the victim’s sexual orientation and gender identity. This figure marks an 8.6% rise from approximately 2,700 similar incidents recorded in 2022. While the overall violent crime rate saw a 3% decline over the same period, bias-motivated crimes, particularly those targeting the LGBTQ+ community, have notably increased.

Breaking down the statistics, bias related to sexual orientation constituted 18.1% of all recorded hate crimes, while gender identity-related incidents accounted for 4.3%. These categories were the third and fourth most common motivations for bias-fuelled crimes, following race or ethnicity and religion.

Within the sphere of anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes, incidents motivated by the victim's sexual orientation (excluding those against heterosexual individuals) were particularly prevalent. In 2023, there were 2,389 such incidents, representing an uptick of 9.1% from the 2,188 incidents in 2022, and an 83% increase from 1,300 incidents documented in 2021.

Gender identity-related hate crimes have also shown a steep rise. The number of such incidents spiked from 307 in 2021 to 515 in 2022, reaching 547 in 2023. This escalation highlights the growing vulnerability of gender-nonconforming individuals.

The surge in hate crimes coincides with the introduction of numerous anti-LGBTQ+ legislations at state levels. Over recent years, Republicans and conservative figures have increasingly leveraged anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric as a political strategy. This has led to a substantial rise in the number of bills aimed at limiting LGBTQ+ rights and visibility.

In 2023, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) tracked 530 anti-LGBTQ+ bills introduced across the United States. These bills included bans on gender-affirming care, restrictions on school content, prohibitions on transgender participation in sports, and limitations on changing gender markers on identity documents. Although 343 of these bills have been defeated so far, they retain the potential for revival.

Prominent organisations within the LGBTQ+ advocacy sphere have pointed to harmful rhetoric as a significant contributing factor to the rise in hate crimes. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and PFLAG National have both issued statements addressing the severity of the current climate.

“Every lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer person in this country should be free to live their lives without fear that we’ll be the target of a violent incident purely because of who we are and who we love,” commented HRC President Kelley Robinson. Despite increasing public acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals, Robinson emphasised that hate crimes against the community persist, even as general crime declines.

Brian K. Bond, CEO of PFLAG National, echoed these concerns, highlighting the continued dangers facing the LGBTQ+ community. He called for compassion and legislative action to ensure safety and affirmation for LGBTQ+ individuals nationwide.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)