



HATRED & GUN VIOLENCE: A DEADLY COMBINATION

We are strongest against hate when we are united. This introductory resource was created to help gun violence prevention advocates understand about the intersection of hateful ideologies—especially white nationalism—and gun violence.

THE PROBLEM

**RISING HATE CRIMES
& LEADERS USING
HATEFUL RHETORIC**

+

**UNFETTERED
ACCESS TO
GUNS**

=

**A NATIONAL
EMERGENCY**

No one should be afraid to walk down the street, enter their place of worship, or otherwise gather with members of their community out of fear that they will be targeted by a shooter. Racist, xenophobic and other dangerous rhetoric combined with virtually unfettered access to firearms creates a climate of fear and instigates violence. The right to live free from fear, hate, violence and discrimination is directly threatened when hate-fueled individuals have easy access to firearms.

TYPES OF HATE-FUELED GUN VIOLENCE

- **WHITE NATIONALISM** - White nationalists (a.k.a. white supremacists) believe that the “white race” is superior and should therefore dominate over everyone else. This racist ideology has inspired horrific high-profile race-based shootings intentionally targeting Black and Brown communities. According to 2017 FBI data³, nearly 60% of hate crimes are committed on the basis of race. Of those crimes, nearly 50% of those crimes are anti-Black and 10.9% anti-Latinx. White nationalism also encompasses xenophobia—hatred of people from other countries, including anti-immigrant hatred.
- **RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY** - Anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hate have motivated appalling massacres at places of worship across the U.S. Other religious minorities, such as members of the Sikh community, are also at risk of heightened violence. In 2017, over 20% of reported hate crimes⁴ were based on religion.
- **SEXUAL ORIENTATION/GENDER IDENTITY** - Hatred based on sexual orientation or gender identity (real or perceived) can be deadly, as seen at the Pulse nightclub massacre—the deadliest known attack on LGBTQIA people in U.S. history—as well as the use of firearms to intimidate and murder members of the transgender community.
- **MISOGYNY** - Hatred towards women and/or a history of domestic abuse is a terrifying commonality among mass shooters⁵. The shooter in Dayton, OH, for example, kept a “rape list” of girls in his school⁶, and the California synagogue shooter referenced an online misogynist movement⁷.

Individuals at the intersection of one or more of the aforementioned identities may endure a higher risk: For example, Pulse victims were predominantly Latinx, and transgender women of color are disproportionately at risk of being shot^{8, 9, 10}.

THE FACTS

**HATE CRIMES
INCREASED 17% FROM
2016-2017 ALONE¹**



**BETWEEN 2010-2014,
APPROX. 43,000 HATE
CRIMES INVOLVED A
FIREARM²**

**THAT MEANS
OVER 8,500 HATE
CRIMES PER YEAR
(OR 23 EVERY DAY)
INVOLVE A
GUN**

**THERE IS NO FEDERAL
LAW PROHIBITING
SOMEONE CONVICTED
OF A MISDEMEANOR
HATE CRIME FROM
BUYING A GUN.**



Photo by Mario Tama / Getty Images

EL PASO, TX

In August 2019, a white nationalist opened fire at a shopping center in El Paso frequented by Latinx communities, killing 22 and injuring 24. The shooter left behind a manifesto confirming his intention to kill as many Latinx people as possible, [echoing](#) hate-fueling terms used by Pres. Trump such as “invasion” and “infestation”.



Photo by The Washington Post / Getty Images

TREE OF LIFE SYNAGOGUE, PA

In October 2018, an anti-Semite/white nationalist opened fire at the Tree of Life synagogue, killing 11 and injuring seven. He’s alleged to have made anti-Semitic remarks during the shooting and on social media. The attack is believed to be the deadliest on the Jewish community in U.S. history.



Photo by Chip Somodevilla / Getty Images

MOTHER EMANUEL, SC

In June 2015, an avowed white nationalist opened fire during a prayer service at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, killing nine Black worshipers and injuring three more. A handwritten list of other nearby Black churches was found in his car. From his prison cell, the shooter wrote a white supremacist manifesto and said that he did not regret his actions.

Hate-motivated gun violence is not limited to gun deaths or injury. Violent extremists use guns to threaten and intimidate marginalized communities. In doing so, they inflict serious harm without pulling the trigger.

HELP FIGHT HATE

1. ADVOCATE FOR POLICIES TO REDUCE HATE-RELATED GUN VIOLENCE

Legislation won’t prevent all hate-motivated gun violence, but there are several bills that—if passed—would help keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people, including those who commit hate crimes. Ask your members of Congress to support:

- **Disarm Hate Act of 2019** ([Senate](#) and [House](#))
- **Background Check Expansion Act of 2019** ([Senate](#) - [Online action](#))
- **Assault Weapons Ban of 2019** ([Senate](#) and [House](#) - [Online action](#))

You can also support the passage of these same laws in your state. Check out your state’s gun violence safety rating [here](#). When advocating for gun violence prevention policies like these with government officials, you can refer to messaging suggestions on the next page and other information in this document.

2. SUPPORT GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION WORK LED BY IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by gun homicides, but grassroots and community-led organizations working within communities of color haven’t benefited from the same level of national attention, resources and support as nationally-recognized groups, despite their long-standing critical work on the ground. Seek out Black and Brown-led, Latinx, LGBTQ and other organizations that work on the intersection of identity and gun violence, support their campaigns or ask what you can do to help.

3. STAND WITH COMMUNITIES THAT ARE UNDER ATTACK

Being a responsible ally is a continuous action, not a static or self-proclaimed identity, and it is not about ‘saving’ anyone. Being a responsible ally includes:

- Acknowledging your own privilege (you can simultaneously be a member of one or more marginalized communities while still holding other privileges).
- Listening to the voices of people with whom you’re hoping to ally yourself.
- Turning the spotlight away from yourself. You don’t need to be a “voice for the voiceless”—just pass the mic.
- Taking responsibility for engaging with other people who share your privilege. For example, someone who identifies as white calling out racism when they see it and bringing other white people into the conversation. Or someone who identifies as a man calling out misogyny or toxic masculinity and talking to other men about how these themes intersect with gun violence.
- Not taking credit for the labor of historically marginalized communities who have been engaged in the work before you.
- Critically thinking about the possible unintended impacts gun violence prevention rhetoric or policies may have on vulnerable or marginalized communities.

For example: If a community is holding a public vigil or demonstration in response to threats made against them, show up or ask what you can do to help. See if there are opportunities to write notes of support to people who have been impacted. Most importantly, listen to what is needed. If you aren’t directly impacted, then the best thing you can do might be to talk to people around you who share your same privilege(s) to generate awareness and build support.

SAMPLE TWEETS

White nationalism & xenophobia are on the rise. We must stand together & actively denounce hatred! 🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸

bit.ly/DisarmHate20

Want to help #DisarmHate?

- Support policies that would reduce hate-based gun violence
- Call out leaders & media who use hateful rhetoric

#EndGunViolence
bit.ly/DisarmHate20

Hate crimes went up 17% in 2017 📈

23+ hate crimes involving a gun happen *every day*.

But we have NO fed. law stopping someone convicted of a misdemeanor hate crime from buying a gun!

#DisarmHate bit.ly/DisarmHate20

Insufficient gun laws +
Rising hate crimes 📈
= A NATIONAL EMERGENCY !

We must #DisarmHate to
#EndGunViolence.
bit.ly/DisarmHate20

NO ONE should be afraid to...

- Walk down the street 🇺🇸
- Enter their place of worship 🕌🛤️🛤️🛤️
- Or otherwise gather w. their community 🌈

...out of fear that they'll be shot just because of who they are.

#DisarmHate #EndGunViolence
bit.ly/DisarmHate20

HELP FIGHT HATE

4. COUNTER HATEFUL RHETORIC IN THE MEDIA

Call attention to hateful, dehumanizing rhetoric. When you see this rhetoric in the news, consider writing a letter to the editor (LTE) calling it out and explaining why it's especially dangerous to encourage hate towards vulnerable communities given the virtually unfettered availability of guns.

Letters to the editor are a great way to respond to articles. Papers tend to publish letters that are in response to pieces that have run in their paper. Make sure that you specifically identify the article you are responding to in your LTE and that you make your argument succinctly (usually less than 200 words).

TIPS FOR WRITING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

- Include local relevance when possible to drive home the personal impact this issue has on your community—both to incentivize your paper to publish your unique point of view and to help others understand its significance.
- Remember that it may be more impactful if readers (including officials) think you're writing simply as an average concerned constituent rather than in association with an organization.
- Outlets tend to know when they're being sent a pre-written LTE from an organization, so rather than a template, create your own personal message using whatever talking points have been provided.
- Visit your paper's website to check out their specific requirements. You'll usually find this information under an "Opinion" section of your paper's website.

TALKING POINTS YOU CAN USE

- The purpose of white nationalist and other hate-fueled violence is to instill fear. And the use of uniquely deadly weapons such as high-velocity semi-automatic rifles sends a terrifying message to those of us directly attacked, as well as our broader communities.
- No one should be afraid to walk down the street, enter their place of worship or otherwise gather with members of their community out of fear that they will be targeted by a shooter.
- Our leaders have a responsibility to refrain from using racist, xenophobic or other hateful language and to actively denounce it when they hear it. Otherwise they are putting lives at risk.
- We all have the right to be treated equally and governments have an obligation to protect people from discrimination based on who they are.
- Our government must take active steps to ensure that all of us are able to live freely regardless of race, country of origin, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity. This includes preventing hate-motivated gun violence.
- Amid a rising tide of white nationalism and xenophobia, we will take every opportunity to stand together and actively denounce hatred.

Note: There is debate among the gun violence prevention community whether or not to use the terms "terrorism"/"terrorist". Some argue that these are politicized terms that tend to be applied in a discriminatory manner in which communities of color—particularly those of Middle Eastern descent—bear the brunt. Others stand by calls for a domestic terrorism law. If you wish to avoid using these terms, try instead using "violent white nationalism", "violent anti-Semitism", etc.

Resource created with the support of Amnesty International and States United to Prevent Gun Violence with input from many allies and stakeholders.

Future resources will seek to address the systemic, institutional interaction between historical and contemporary white supremacy and gun violence in the United States.

RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [Hate and Guns: A Terrifying Combination - Center for American Progress \(Report\)](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions About the Disarm Hate Act - Center for American Progress](#)
- [In the Line of Fire: Human Rights and the U.S. Gun Violence Crisis - Amnesty International USA \(Report\)](#)
- [Disarming Hate - Giffords Law Center \(Fact Sheet\)](#)
- [Hate-Fueled Violence Is on the Rise - Giffords \(Blog\)](#)
- [Disarm Hate: The Deadly Intersection of Guns and Hate Crimes - Everytown for Gun Safety](#)

ADVOCACY MATERIALS

- [Disarm Hate Backgrounder](#) - Internal issue briefing for supporters who wish to lobby their members of Congress
- [Disarm Hate Leave-Behind](#) - Resource to leave with members of Congress during lobby meeting

CITATIONS

¹ <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2017-hate-crime-statistics-released-111318>

It's important to note that this data is not all-encompassing, but rather a reflection of hate violence that was first reported by victims to state/local authorities, then voluntarily reported to the FBI by state/local authorities, and only then categorized as a hate crime by the FBI. We do not know how many instances of hate-motivated violence are not reflected by these numbers. Some communities may also choose not to report hate-motivated violence due to a distrust or fear of law enforcement, so these numbers may in fact be much higher.

² <https://www.americanprogress.org/press/release/2016/02/24/131653/release-cap-report-finds-43000-hate-crimes-involved-guns-from-2010-to-2014-calls-for-legislation-barring-individuals-convicted-of-misdemeanor-hate-crimes-from-obtaining-guns/>

³ <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2017/topic-pages/incidents-and-offenses>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <https://time.com/5016731/link-between-domestic-violence-mass-shooters/>

⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/05/us/connor-betts-dayton-shooting-profile/index.html>

⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/04/27/california-synagogue-shooting-multiple-injuries/>

⁸ [Time to Act: Fatal Violence Against Transgender People in America \(2017\)](#)

⁹ [A National Epidemic: Fatal Anti-Transgender Violence in America \(2018\)](#)

¹⁰ <https://www.hrc.org/blog/hrc-mourns-brianna-bb-hill-black-transgender-woman-killed-in-kansas-city>