



The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Urges the U.S. Department of Justice and the Trump Administration to Increase Hate Crime Enforcement to Address White Nationalism

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, by majority vote, strongly urges the United States Department of Justice and the Trump Administration to increase hate crimes enforcement responsive to white nationalism and the violence motivated by hate targeted at people of color, faith, and newcomers to our country.

In the last few years, self-identified white nationalist extremists have sought out and killed people of faith in their houses of worship:

- The 2015 murders of 9 African American parishioners at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, a predominantly African American church.
- The 2018 hate killings of two African American men in Lexington, Kentucky, after failing first to enter a historically black church.
- The 2018 killings of 11 members of the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Prior to the killing, he expressed his hatred of Jews and migrants to America on various extremist websites.

The mass murder of 50 worshipers of Islam at the mosques in Christchurch was allegedly committed by a person with similar animus and virulent anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant views. He allegedly posted live video feeds of his killing spree on social media that reached across the globe, including and especially within the United States.¹ Indeed, neo-Nazi sites based in our country were touting their enjoyment of the video and hailing the actions of the alleged shooter.²

White nationalism is not confined to the reign of terror and violence perpetuated by the Ku Klux Klan³, but is an active presence that now spans cities, states, nations, continents, and oceans, aided and abetted by the digital and wireless age in which we

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/14/asia/christchurch-mosque-shooting-intl/index.html>

² <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2019/03/15/after-new-zealand-shooting-far-right-racists-claim-victimhood-hail-killer-hero>

³ https://www.usccr.gov/press/2017/Statement_08-18-2017_Charlottesville.pdf
<https://www.usccr.gov/press/2018/11-02-Pittsburgh-Jeffersontown-PR.pdf>

live.⁴ Regrettably its presence in the United States is an infectious virus, and an active threat to liberty, equality and basic human dignity that must be stopped and cured by the sunlight of transparency and the balm of leadership from all sectors of American society – political, business, religious, and our communities.

Our hearts go out to the victims of Christchurch and the good people of New Zealand and to the victims of similar domestic violence and murder. And we also know we have a responsibility here, at home, to combat the forces that promote these violent attacks, because, as we have seen time and again, this kind of hate knows no boundaries and no restrictions of geography.

To not act forcefully and forthrightly at moments such as this is a missed opportunity to say to white nationalist extremist groups and individuals that their actions are intolerable in America. The United States Department of Justice has the tools and authority to respond effectively to hate and to lead the country in safeguarding our core civil rights commitments of equality for all. This Commission urges DOJ and the Trump Administration to use every tool available to lead our nation against hate.

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. The Commission: in our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. For information about the Commission, please visit www.usccr.gov and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

⁴ The Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Report for 2018 is chilling. According to the report, “[t]he total number of hate groups rose to 1,020 in 2018, up about 7 percent from 2017. White nationalist groups alone surged by nearly 50 percent last year, growing from 100 chapters in 2017 to 148 in 2018 The overall death toll tied to the radical right rose in 2018 as well, as white supremacists in Canada and the U.S. killed at least 40 people, up from 17 in 2017 Identity Evropa — a white nationalist group that tries to dress up its racism under the label “identitarianism” — saw its chapter count rise for the third year in a row, from one in 2016 to 15 in 2017 to 38 in 2018. The white nationalist blog and podcasting site The Right Stuff (TRS) started with four chapters in 2016 and now has 34. And the TRS offshoot focused on creating an independent South, Identity Dixie, which only began in 2017, has seven chapters now. The violent neo-Nazi organization Atomwaffen Division, whose members are allegedly associated with as many as five known killings since May 2017, grew from one chapter in 2017 to 27 in 2018.” Southern Poverty Law Center, Intelligence Report, Spring 2019, Issue 166 at pp. 36, 39.