

Hate crimes against gay, transgender people rise, report says

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs report says violent crimes against people in the LGBT community rose 13% in 2010, and that minorities and transgender women were more likely to be targeted.

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An 18-year-old gay man from Texas allegedly slain by a classmate who feared a sexual advance. A 31-year-old transgender woman from Pennsylvania found dead with a pillowcase around her head. A 24-year-old lesbian from Florida purportedly killed by her girlfriend's father, who disapproved of the relationship.

The homicides are a sampling of 2010 crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people compiled by a national coalition of anti-hate organizations.

The report, released Tuesday, showed a 13% increase over 2009 in violent crimes committed against people because of their perceived or actual sexual orientation, gender identity or status as HIV positive, according to the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs.

Last year's homicide count reached 27, up from 22 in 2009, and was the second-highest total since the coalition began tracking such crimes in 1996. Of those killed, 70% were minorities and 44% were transgender women.

The data are compiled by the coalition's 43 participating organizations and are not comprehensive. They include crimes reported to the groups by victims who did not seek help from law enforcement. In fact, 50% of the 2010 assault survivors did not make police reports, with minorities and transgender people the least likely to come forward, the report said.

Among the cases was an April 2010 attack on Cal State Long Beach transgender student Colle Carpenter, who was cornered in a campus restroom by an assailant who carved "It" on his chest. Jake Finney, project manager with the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center, said campus police initially "were not clear that the word 'It' was a slur and indicated anti-transgender bias." The center contacted the FBI, which assisted in the investigation, and the crime was ultimately classified as hate-motivated, Finney said.

The 2010 murder count is second to the 29 logged in 1999 and 2008. Among the 2008 fatalities was gay Oxnard junior high school student Larry King. The classmate charged in that killing, Brandon McInerney, is on trial.

Coalition members said hate crimes tended to increase after other high-profile attacks and when civil rights advances for the LGBT community were publicly debated.

"As we move forward toward full equality, we also have to be responsive and concerned with violence that may run alongside of it," spokeswoman Roberta Sklar said. "We don't want to go back into the closet to avoid it."