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3 March 2016

Keywords: Islam, Terrorism, Statistics, Crime, Minority

The following issue briefs explains the misconception of the most persecuted religious group in modern America. Additionally, this piece dissects crime statistics to make a hypothesis on which religious minority may become the most vulnerable to hate crimes in the near future.

What Religious Minority in America is in the Most Danger?

Major violence in the world today seems to revolve around terroristic attacks, on innocent people, in the name of religion. Unfortunately for the people of Islam, their religion has been at the forefront of misinterpretation, which in turn has led to the execution of many people across the globe and more locally, in America. Immediately after the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, Muslim Americans immediately felt the pressure of the media and even the government. Flying became difficult due to “random” increased security checks. In his book, *Islam, Muslims and America*, Khan Arshad writes about how the media misrepresents the faith that is being corrupted by radicals. He refers to the scrutiny peaceful Muslims have been falling under as unjustified. According to a CNN article titled “Hate incidents against American Muslims unabated; political rhetoric not helping”, hate crimes against Muslim Americans have increased dramatically over the last decade. Though there has been a clear rise in hate crimes targeting Muslim Americans, the true victims of American hate crimes based on religion are in fact, a different religious group. Jewish community in America are, to this day, the most in danger of violence due to their religious beliefs. Though it is true the numbers of violent crime committed

against Muslim Americans are rising, the amount of violence Jewish Americans face is staggeringly higher.

Before displaying the astounding violence statistics that surround the Jewish community, it is important to understand the current rise in anti-Islam hate crimes in order to create a perspective. Between the years 1995 and 2000, the FBI recorded all hate crimes based on religion and categorized them by religion (note that this is pre-9/11). In this time period, on 2% of hate crimes were committed against Muslim Americans (Table 1). However, when the FBI compiled their data of hate crimes based on religion between the years 2001 and 2012, Muslims fell victim to 12% of the national hate crimes (Table 2). A 10% increase over one decade is something that should definitely not go unnoticed. Likewise, a 10% decrease should not go unnoticed. Jewish Americans over the same two time periods stated above, have experienced a 10% decrease in situations when Jews fall victim to violence in America (Tables 1 and 2). However, even as anti-Muslim American crime increases, Jewish Americans are still victim to over 60% of all hate crimes between the years 2001 and 2012. Yet, as we move closer to the present and look at the FBI's most recent crime report (2014), Jewish American hate crimes have just fallen below 60%. This could be seen as a diminishing amount of American anti-Semitism, or this could be seen as the rise of a new enemy for hate groups. This data seems to suggest that hate groups may have started to target Muslim Americans far more often in light of the recent and ongoing terrorism being performed in the name of Islam. However, I would argue that despite the growing number of hate crimes targeting Muslims in America, Jewish Americans are still certainly at the most risk of danger. The FBI has record of 18 more openly anti-Semitic hate groups than there are anti-Islam hate groups in America. This leads me to believe that the media has caused the spike in hate crimes towards Muslim Americans and that they are being enacted

by Americans that may not necessarily belong to a hate group. Whereas Jewish Americans face violence from organized hate groups which poses as a much greater threat to their well-being.

Figure 1: FBI Crime Statistics

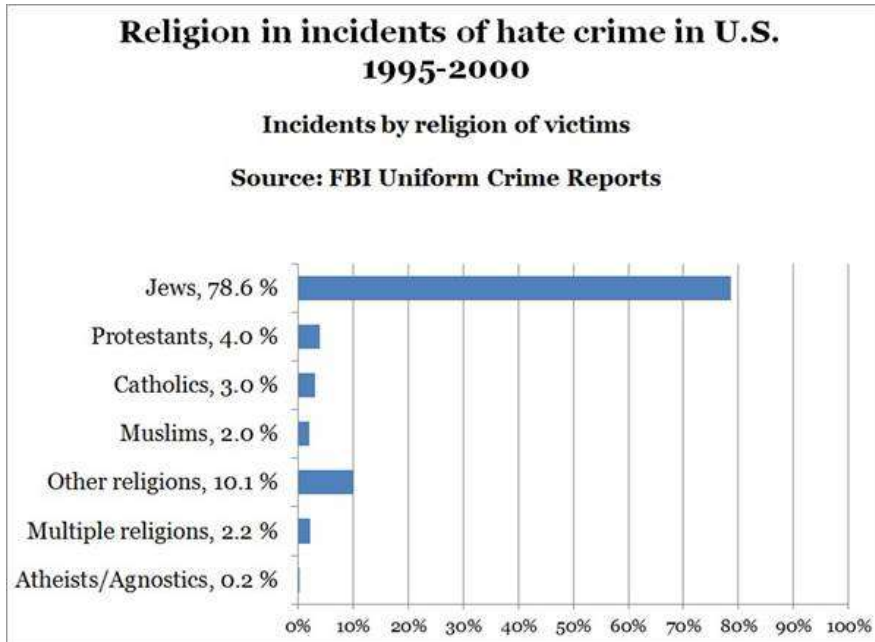
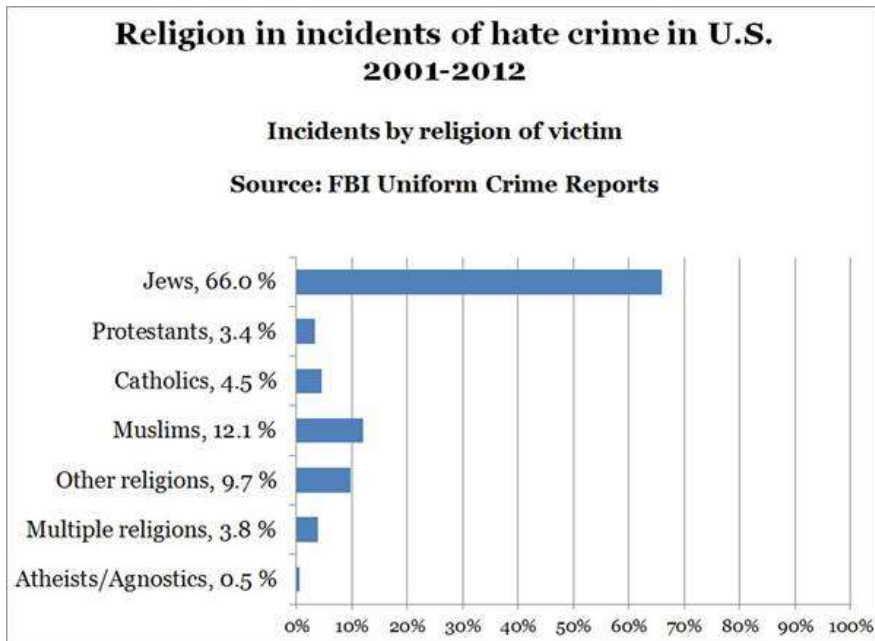


Figure 2: FBI Crime Statistics



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Relevant Websites

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<http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>

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