Over 8,400 Hate Crime Incidents Reported In US In 2017, Says FBI

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Washington: Over 8,400 hate crime incidents - including 24 against Sikhs, 15 against Hindus and over 300 against Muslims - were reported in the US in 2017, according to an FBI report.

The report that released yesterday is topped with 1,678 hate crimes committed against the Jews.

In all, as many as 8,437 hate crimes were recorded in the year 2017. Nine anti-Buddhist hate crimes were also registered last year, the report said.

There has been a rise in racism and crimes against South Asian Americans since the November 2016 election of President Donald Trump, first Indian-origin US Senator Kamala Harris said recently, calling on Americans to stand united and speak the truth to deal with these issues.

According to the report, a total of 24 anti-Sikh, 15 anti-Hindu and 314 anti-Muslim hate crimes were reported in the US.

Indian engineer Srinivas Kuchibhotla was killed in Kansas in Midwestern US in February last year.

A 43-year-old Indian-origin store owner Harnish Patel was shot dead outside his home in South Carolina on March 2.

A 39-year-old Sikh man Deep Rai was injured on March 3 when an unidentified person shot him outside his home in the city of Kent.

An Indian-origin girl was racially abused on a train by an African-American man in New York on February 23.

The Sikh Coalition, a community-based organisation that defends Sikh civil rights, said that in 2017, it received 12 anti-Sikh hate crime cases and tracked a total of 24 anti-Sikh hate-related incidents nationwide.

"This figure alone is under representative of the problem since many individuals impacted by hate do not report the incidents.

"For the reported cases to law enforcement, a historical challenge is that agencies routinely fail to identify bias during investigations. Even when they do, they often do not report it to federal authorities, so the data never shows up in the statistics," it said.

"Even with incomplete data, this new report shows our elected officials that hate in America is thriving and profoundly impacting the safety and well-being of minority communities nationwide," said Sim Singh, Sikh Coalition senior advocacy manager.

He said politicians were culpable when they drive divisive policies and "bigoted political rhetoric" that routinely puts lives at greater risk.

There are approximately 500,000 Sikhs in the US. In the wake of the 2012 Oak Creek, Wisconsin massacre inside a gurdwara, the FBI finally agreed to begin tracking anti-Sikh hate crimes in 2015.