



Hate Crime in Russia: Brief Analysis, Statistics, Recommendations

Russia is going through rapid growth of aggressive Russian nationalism. Admittedly, it has been here before, but a qualitative shift occurred at the borderline between the past two decades. On the one hand, massive ethnic xenophobia increased dramatically, and has since become an outlook shared by most of the country's population. On the other hand, archaic forms of political nationalism prevalent in the 90-ies have been replaced by new trends, such as "relatively respectable" populist nationalism targeting migrants, and explicitly neo-Nazi movements which form the actual political foundation of this populism. By now, neo-Nazi are unorganized yet, but fairly numerous, with dozens of thousands members. It is also significant that ethnic nationalisms other than Russian have either become moderate or experience a decline. So there is hardly any conflict of different nationalists in the multi-ethnic Russia; rather, the nationalism of ethnic Russians, rooted in the established xenophobic majority, is increasingly active.

You can see below the violent hate crime statistics. We should warn that these statistics are intentionally conservative and probably underestimate the actual situation. It is likely that more people were killed, while the number of victims beaten or wounded in such attacks may be at least triple of the estimate. You can also find there the statistics of prosecutions and punishments. It may be an underestimate as well, but only to a slight extent, if to compare it against some official figures. It follows from the statistics that one hate crime out of twenty is punished – at best.

It would be unfair to say that the Russian law enforcement agencies do not make an effort to improve their performance. They certainly perform better now than a few years ago. They have even improved their handling of "hate propaganda" cases which used to be hopeless before. But there is no barrier available to stop the wave of violence. Indeed, a one in twenty risk of being punished is a poor deterrent for a young aggressive man inspired by racist ideology...

Violence has become increasingly demonstrative. Killings in dark corners are replaced by killings in broad daylight, in public places. Hate-motivated violence expands its geography, as well as numbers. It keeps targeting new ethnic, religious and social groups. Officially, the main target of neo-Nazi and the like is someone who comes from the Caucasus. But in practice, we have observed that the choice of victim is largely random and can be based on any visual distinction from a "standard Slav." Maybe only Africans have a higher risk of being targeted, because they are relatively rare in Russia and highly noticeable.

Attacks against leftist youth have been much more frequent in past two years. However, radical anti-fascists have also been increasingly aggressive lately. Street wars were perceived as a romantic image in neo-Nazi and anti-fascist propaganda; now they are becoming a reality.

Although infrequently, but increasingly often, local - predominantly ethnic Russian – communities stage massive protests against the so-called migrants. In Russia, the term *migrant* is understood broadly and does not necessarily correspond to *immigrant* (i.e. foreigner), but includes all non-Slavs coming to live in communities traditionally perceived as ethnically Russian. The protests are always a disproportional reaction to criminal episodes involving the said *migrants*. Suffice it to say that by official statistics, foreigners are less likely to commit crimes than Russian nationals. However, the high overall level of xenophobia in society combined with local specifics increasingly cause accidental episodes to trigger massive meetings demanding discrimination against, or even deportation of, *migrants*. In some cases, riots and lynching have taken place, as in Kondopoga this September.

The authorities are responsible for the current situation. Firstly, they fail to insist that the law enforcement agencies address these issues. Secondly, they have nothing to offer as an antidote to massive ethnic xenophobia. Thirdly, by manipulating the political process, the government keeps trying to create a version of “manageable nationalism” and so contributes to further legitimization of nationalist thinking.

Among other things, the government actively manipulates the issues of hate crime and hate speech. The legal definition of *extremism* is excessively broad, so it is applicable not only to a narrow circle of really dangerous groups, but to virtually any independent group or publication - not necessarily oppositional. Official and semi-official propaganda labels opposition members as "fascists" - even though they have nothing to do with nationalism. Criminal sentences have been meted out to human rights defenders falsely accused of inciting ethnic and religious hatred. Newspapers have been closed under pressure from local authorities following similar, equally false, accusations. This kind of pressure is likely to continue.

This is not only dangerous for the overall situation in the country, but can undermine any attempts to counteract the really dangerous nationalist groups. The law enforcement agents become unfocused in their work against extremism, and consequently, less effective. For example, in 2002 the adoption of the very strict Federal Law on Combating Extremist Activity - drafted, ostensibly, to assist law enforcement, created a situation where courts no longer closed ultra-nationalist papers, even though such publications explicitly violated Russian laws. Increased sentencing for ultra-nationalist crimes over this period was achieved through the application of older, non-politicized legal provisions.

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Consolidates Statistics of Racist and Neo-Nazi Attacks
between 1 January and 30 September 2006¹
 (by the city)

City	2004			2005			1.01-30.09.2006		
	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims
Moscow	14	59	73	10	170	180	26	146	172
St. Petersburg	9	32	41	4	45	49	5	27	32
Abakan	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
Astrakhan	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
Barnaul	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Belgorod	0	2	2	0	3	3	0	0	0
Blagoveschensk	0	2	2	0	7	7	0	1	1
Bryansk	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
Cheboksary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Chelyabinsk	1	4	5	0	0	0	0	1	1
Chita Oblast	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Irkutsk Oblast	3	0	3	2	5	7	0	8	8
Ivanovo	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Izhevsk	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Kaliningrad	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	10	10
Kaluga	0	0	0	0	11	11	0	2	2
Kazan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Khabarovsk	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
Kirov	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Kostroma	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	5	5
Krasnodar	2	32	34	1	3	4	0	3	3
Krasnoyarsk	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	3	3
Kurgan	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	0
Kursk	0	5	5	0	2	2	0	0	0
Lipetsk	0	1	1	0	3	3	0	0	0
Maikop	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Murmansk	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Nizhny Novgorod	1	5	6	4	12	16	0	7	7
Novgorod	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	0
Novosibirsk	2	12	14	1	10	11	0	6	6
Omsk Oblast	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
Oryol	0	8	8	0	1	1	0	7	7
Perm	0	1	1	3	2	5	0	0	0
Petrozavodsk	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
Postov-on-the-Don	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	2	2
Pskov	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Ryazan	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	3
Samara	1	3	4	2	4	6	0	2	2
Saratov	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

¹ In alphabetic order, except Moscow and St. Petersburg as the main centers of racist violence.

Based on SOVA Center monitoring

Smolensk	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
Stavropol	0	0	0	0	21	21	0	0	0
Syktyvkar	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
Tambov	0	3	3	0	2	2	0	0	0
Tomsk Oblast	0	3	3	0	6	6	0	4	4
Tula Oblast	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	3
Tver Oblast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Tyumen Oblast	3	1	4	1	0	1	0	11	11
Ufa	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	0	0
Vladimir Oblast	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vladivostok	5	9	14	0	3	3	0	4	4
Volgograd	0	2	2	0	1	1	2	2	4
Voronezh	1	2	3	1	21	22	1	3	4
Yaroslavl Oblast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
Yekaterinburg	1	7	8	6	6	11	0	4	4
Yoshkar Ola	0	1	1	0	15	15	0	5	5
Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	46	212	258	36	401	437	36	286	322

Consolidated Statistics of Racist and Neo-Nazi Attacks in 2004-2006
(by the season)

	2004			2005			2006		
	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims
Winter (December/January+ February/no date ²)	9 (0/9/0) ³	22 (0/22/0)	31 (0/31/0)	7 (3/4/0)	72 (14/52/6)	79 (17/56/6)	8 (4/4/0)	102 (53/44/5)	110 (57/48/5)
Spring	10	77	87	5	119	124	14	76	90
Summer	16	20	36	6	64	70	16	152	168
Autumn	8	79	87	17	107	124	-	-	-
Year total	46	212	258	36	401	437	-	-	-
Note	Besides, we know of 13 killings of homeless people where the law enforcement authorities suspect an ideological (neo-Nazi) element.			Besides, we know of 8 killings and 4 beatings of homeless people, where the law enforcement authorities suspect an ideological (neo-Nazi) element.			Besides, on May 27-28, 2006, in Moscow alone, skinheads and other homophobes battered at least 50 gays. The statistics include 12 killed and 54 wounded by the blast attack in Cherkizovsky Market in Moscow on 21 August 2006.		

Consolidates Statistics of Racist and Neo-Nazi Attacks in 2004 and 2006
(by the object of attack)

Year	2004		2005		2006	
	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Killed	Beaten, wounded
	46	212	36	401	36	286
Including:						
Dark-skinned people	1	33	3	37	2	18
People from Central Asia	7	20	11	28	7	36
People from the Caucasus	14	37	9	52	9	46
People from the Middle East and North Africa	4	12	1	16	0	9
People from Asia-Pacific Region (China, Viet-Nam, Mongolia, etc.)	8	29	4	57	2	18
Other people of "non-Slav appearance"	2	20	3	70	3	30
Members of youth subcultures and leftist youth	0	4	3	121	1	49
Others, or not known	10	57	2	20	12	80

² All attacks where we only know the year of the incident are classed under 'January'.

³ January and February 2004.

Statistics of Convictions Taking into Account the Racial Hate Motive of Violent Crimes in 2004-2006 (September 30)

	Number of convictions	Number of offenders convicted	Including conditional sentences or release from punishment
2004			
Moscow	2	5	unknown
Moscow Oblast	1	9	6
St. Petersburg	2	10	3
Voronezh	1	3	0
Novgorod	1 ⁴	1	0
Vladimir Oblast	1	1	1
<i>Total</i>	8	29	10
2005			
Moscow	2	4	0
Moscow Oblast	2	8	0
St. Petersburg	2	10	4 ⁵
Blagoveschensk	1	4	0
Vladivostok	1	1	0
Volgograd	1	7	0
Yekaterinburg	1	3	0
Lipetsk	1 ⁶	4	0
Murmansk	1	2	1
Perm	1	1	0
Tyumen Oblast	1	5	0
Tambov	1	1	0
<i>Total</i>	15	50	5
2006			
Moscow	3	6	1
Oryol	2	6 ⁷	2 ⁴
Tomsk	1	3	0
Kostroma	1	3	2
Saratov	1	5	0
St. Petersburg	1	2	0
Nizhny Novgorod	2	4	unknown
Yekaterinburg	2	6 ⁸	0
Novosibirsk	1	unknown	unknown
Kaluga Oblast	1	2	0
Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk	1	1	0
Voronezh	1	13	7
Belgorod	1	11	1
<i>Total</i>	18	44	13 ⁹

⁴ For threats to blow up a synagogue.

⁵ Still another individual was acquitted for lack of evidence.

⁶ With a judicial determination addressed to the City Administration.

⁷ Estimated minimum; in one case, it is only known that a sentence has been passed.

⁸ Including 3 convicted for setting up an extremist community, and also for a murder where the hate motive was not recognized.

⁹ Estimated minimum.

Statistics of Convictions for Hate Propaganda in 2004-2006 (September 30)

	Number of convictions	Number of offenders convicted	Including conditional sentences or release from punishment
2004			
Novgorod	1	1	0
Izhevsk	1	1	1
Novosibirsk	1	1	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>
2005			
Moscow	1	1	1
Yekaterinburg	1	1	0
Kemerovo Oblast	4	4 ¹⁰	1
Kirov	1	1	0
Novgorod	1	3	0
Oryol	1	2	2
Syktvykar	1	1	1
Khabarovsk	1	1	0 ¹¹
<i>Total</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>5</i>
2006			
Saratov	1	1	1
St. Petersburg	2	2	1
Krasnodar	1	1	0
Kemerovo	1	1	1
Samara	1	1	1
Yekaterinburg	1	1	0
Novgorod	1	1	0
Chelyabinsk	1	2 ¹²	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>4</i>

¹⁰ One individual was convicted twice within one year; he faced the same charges, but for different incidents.

¹¹ The sentence was lifted due to expiry of the statute of limitations.

¹² Combined with a ban on engaging in professional occupation.