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## O.C.'s hate crime tally inches upward

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Reported hate crimes were up slightly in Orange County last year, with African Americans the most targeted group, according to an annual tally released Thursday.

The Orange County Human Relations Commission reported 101 such incidents or crimes in 2006, compared with 97 in 2005. Of those, 19 — up two from a year earlier — were against African Americans, including spray painting racial epithets on homes and physical violence.

Incidents and crimes against Asians and Pacific Islanders grew from two to seven, while those against Latinos dipped from nine to eight in 2006.

Jewish residents reported an increase from 12 to 15 hate crimes.

Incidents and crimes against gays and lesbians dropped from 16 to 13.

Overall, the county's tally was modest compared with larger urban areas such as Los Angeles County, said Russell Kennedy, the commission's executive director.

In L.A. County, reports of racial hate incidents and crimes rose from 285 in 2004 to 415 in 2005, the most recent year tallied, a 46% jump, the county human relations agency found.

In Orange County, Kennedy warned against complacency.

"You cannot be comfortable," he said, "even if only one person was singled out solely because of the color of their skin, the faith they believe in or their sexual orientation."