

# The Star-Ledger

## **N.J. bias incidents rising at a record rate**

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The number of people reporting that they were harassed or hurt because of their identity has sharply increased in New Jersey.

There were 944 “bias incidents” last year, according to state Attorney General Gurbir Grewal.

That’s almost a 66% increase from the year before, when there were 569 incidents. Grewal said that was the largest increase since the state began tracking the data almost three decades ago, and was one of the highest totals overall, although the numbers are preliminary.

“There is nothing too small to report,” Grewal said. “There is no incident that we won’t take seriously and follow up on.”

Grewal announced the increase at a press conference about the Jersey City kosher market shooting, which was one of the incidents. He said anti-Semitic events in particular were also rising.

Hate crime and bias data is flawed, and it’s unclear how much of the increase stems from people reporting prejudice they would have previously kept to themselves.

Officials said they would release more detailed data in the spring, including information about what happened, where the incident occurred and how old the offender was.

Grewal also announced that law enforcement agencies were working on a “statewide bias crimes initiative” that would make it easier to share resources and information. A spokesman declined to go into more detail.

A state task force recently held hearings about bias incidents in schools, and is expected to release a report in February, according to a news release.