



Alliance for Peacebuilding

The Alliance for Peacebuilding Strongly Condemns the Rise in Violent Hate Crimes and Mass Shootings Across the U.S.

The U.S government must act swiftly to develop a bold and coordinated multi-sectoral, evidence-based strategy to prevent and reduce violent conflict and extremism

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CONTACT

Linda Zheng | Linda@allianceforpeacebuilding.org

Washington, D.C., USA. – The Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) is deeply concerned by the increasing conflict dynamics in the U.S., fueled by COVID-19 and years of [growing toxic polarization](#), [violent extremism](#), injustice and [structural racism](#), [income inequality](#), and the [decline of rural America](#). AfP is especially concerned by the rise in violent hate crimes targeting Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) since the onset of the pandemic. Additionally, as social distance restrictions ease, mass shootings are on the rise again, contributing to greater instability. **The U.S. government must address all worsening conflict dynamics by developing a bold and coordinated multi-sectoral, evidence-based strategy to prevent and reduce the drivers of violent conflict and extremism.**

The [January 6th attack on the Capitol](#) didn't just highlight a dramatic [rise in political violence](#) in the U.S., it was the culmination of years of deepening polarization and violent extremism, exacerbated by an unprecedented global pandemic fueling ["stabilization in reverse"](#). The U.S. has also seen its ranking steadily decline on the Global Peace Index, and as of February 2021, [more than 25,000](#) political violence events and demonstrations have occurred across the U.S.

Over the past year, the AAPI community has experienced a significant rise in harassment and hate due to the COVID-19 pandemic and [racially motivated rhetoric](#) used by [political leaders](#) and the [media](#). Asian Americans are not only experiencing increased levels of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination, but facing violent [verbal and physical attacks](#) as well. The AAPI community experienced over [2,800 incidents of hate and discrimination](#) between March and December 2020, a 150% increase in hate crimes targeting Asian Americans across major US cities. AfP strongly condemns the [recent shooting](#) in Atlanta that left eight people, six of them Asian Americans, dead and views the rise in racism and discrimination against Asian Americans as contributing to and fueled by existing conflict dynamics in the U.S.

As the U.S. begins easing social distancing restrictions, violent mass shootings are becoming the "norm" once again. In this past week alone, [seven mass shootings](#) occurred across the country, including a mass shooting at a Kroger grocery store in Colorado. Despite the onset of the pandemic and COVID-19 restrictions, [20,000 Americans were killed by gun violence](#) in the US in 2020—greater than any other year in the last two decades.



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AfP strongly condemns the recent attacks and hate crimes against Asian Americans and the surge in mass shootings across the U.S. We recognize both of these conflict dynamics as contributing to greater instability in the U.S. If we want to step back from the brink of widespread violence and reduce and prevent conflict dynamics, we must acknowledge the escalating risk of violence and hold people accountable to the rule of law, while also addressing grievances and building trust at all levels of society. AfP and its members are already working to [mobilize against oppression](#), [undo institutionalized racism](#), [reduce toxic polarization](#), and reduce political and community violence through the [Trust Network](#). While this work is vital, it is not sufficient. We call on the [U.S government to act swiftly](#) to develop a bold and coordinated multi-sectoral, evidence-based strategy to prevent and reduce the drivers of violent conflict and extremism and build trust in democratic institutions.

With over 130 member organizations, AfP brings together the largest development organizations, most innovative academic institutions, and influential humanitarian and faith-based groups to harness collective action for peace. We build coalitions in key areas of strategy and policy to elevate the entire peacebuilding field, tackling issues too large for any one organization to address alone.