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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

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Ukraine says troops may retreat from eastern region as Russia advances

KYIV/POPASNA, Ukraine, May 27 (Reuters) - Ukraine said on Friday its forces may need to retreat from their last pocket of resistance in Luhansk to avoid being captured by Russian troops pressing a rapid advance in the east that has shifted the momentum of the three-month-old war.

A withdrawal could bring Russian President Vladimir Putin closer to his goal of capturing Ukraine's Luhansk and Donetsk regions in full. His troops have gained ground in the two areas collectively known as the Donbas while blasting some towns to wastelands.

Luhansk's governor, Serhiy Gaidai, said Russian troops had entered Sievierodonetsk, the largest Donbas city still held by Ukraine, after trying to trap Ukrainian forces there for days. Gaidai said 90% of buildings in the town were damaged.

"The Russians will not be able to capture Luhansk region in the coming days as analysts have predicted," Gaidai said on Telegram, referring to Sievierodonetsk and its twin city Lysychansk across the Siverskiy Donets River. read more

"We will have enough strength and resources to defend ourselves. However it is possible that in order not to be surrounded we will have to retreat."

Moscow's separatist proxies said they now controlled Lyman, a railway hub west of Sievierodonetsk. Ukraine said Russia had captured most of Lyman but that its forces were blocking an advance to Sloviansk, a city a half-hour drive further southwest.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Oleskiy Arestovych said overnight that the well-organised attack on Lyman showed Moscow's military, which was driven back from the capital Kyiv in March, was improving its tactics and operations.

'AT GREAT COST'
British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told Bloomberg UK that Putin "at great cost to himself and to the Russian military, is continuing to chew through ground in Donbas".

Report ad
Russian troops advanced after piercing Ukrainian lines last week in the city of Popasna, south of



Sieverodonetsk. Russian ground forces have now captured several villages northwest of Popasna, Britain's Defence Ministry said.

Reached by Reuters journalists in Russian-held territory on Thursday, Popasna was in ruins. The bloated body of a dead man in combat uniform could be seen lying in a courtyard.

Natalia Kovalenko had left the cellar where she sheltered to live in the wreckage of her flat, its windows and balcony blasted away. She said a shell hit the courtyard outside, killing two people and wounding eight.

"I just have to fix the window somehow. The wind is still bad," she said. "We are tired of being so scared."

Russia's eastern gains follow a Ukrainian counter-offensive that pushed Moscow's forces back from Ukraine's second city Kharkiv in May. But Ukrainian forces have been unable to attack Russian supply lines to the Donbas.

In the south, where Moscow has seized a swathe of territory since the Feb. 24 invasion, including the strategic port of Mariupol, Ukrainian officials believe Russia aims to impose permanent rule.

A garage burns following a military strike on a garage near the railway station, amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine, in the frontline city of Lyman, Donetsk region, Ukraine April 28, 2022. REUTERS/Jorge Silva

Ukraine's military said Russia was shipping in military equipment from Russian-annexed Crimea to build defences against any Ukrainian counter-attack and was mining the banks of a reservoir behind a dam on the Dnipro River that separates the forces.

STRUGGLING TO LEAVE
In the Kherson region, north of Crimea, Russian forces were fortifying defences and shelling Ukraine-controlled areas on a daily basis, the region's Ukrainian governor Hennadiy Laguta told a media briefing.

He said the humanitarian situation was critical in some areas and people were finding it almost impossible to leave occupied territory, with the exception of a 200-car convoy that left on Wednesday.

On the diplomatic front, European Union officials said a deal might be reached by Sunday to ban deliveries of Russian oil by sea, accounting for about 75% of the bloc's supply, but not by pipeline, a compromise to win over Hungary and unblock new sanctions. read more

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has criticised the EU for dithering over a ban on Russian energy, saying the bloc was funding Moscow's war effort and that delay "merely means more Ukrainians being killed."

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Volkswagen rejects shareholder push for climate lobbying disclosures

BERLIN, April 9 (Reuters) - Volkswagen (VOWG_p.DE) has rejected a shareholder proposal for it to explain how its lobbying activities align with its climate goals - something two of the carmaker’s leading competitors have already promised to do, one of the investors said on Friday.

A filing by a group of seven shareholders said that while Volkswagen does disclose its trade association memberships, it should go further and say whether the associations’ aims are compatible with its emissions-cutting targets.

Fellow carmakers Mercedes-Benz (MBGn.DE) and BMW (BMWG.DE) have already committed to doing that.

“The Board is failing to deliver transparent oversight of the company’s climate lobbying,” said Charlotta Sydstrand, sustainability strategist at Swedish pension scheme AP7, one of the shareholders involved in the proposal.

Her comments were included in a statement issued by the Church of England Pensions group, which also backed the filing.

The statement said Volkswagen had rejected the proposal on the grounds that the issue was deemed to be beyond the competence of the general meeting.

Volkswagen was not immediately available for comment.

Other supporters of the proposal included Britain’s biggest listed asset manager Schroders and a range of Swedish pension funds.

Pressure by investors on climate-related issues is growing rapidly.

Last week, 34 investors managing more than \$7 trillion in assets warned 17 of Europe’s largest companies, including Volkswagen, they could challenge board directors over their accounting of climate risks. “Investors cannot understand the true value of a company without knowing the embedded climate risks,” Natasha Landell-Mills, partner and head of stewardship at investment manager Sarasin & Partners, one of the signatories to the letters, said in an interview.

Others to sign include the fund arm of HSBC (HSBA.L), French public



The logo of German carmaker Volkswagen is seen on a rim cap in a showroom of a Volkswagen car dealer in Brussels, Belgium July 9, 2020. REUTERS/Francois Lenoir/ File Photo

pension scheme ERAFP, and BMO Global Asset Management EMEA, part of U.S. asset manager Columbia Threadneedle.

Investors have tried to press the companies on the issue before. In 2020, through the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change, they laid out a series of steps boards needed to take to align their accounts with the Paris Agreement on climate, including changing key accounting assumptions.

The investors found that most companies failed

to adequately respond, prompting the latest string of letters warning boards they faced opposition at their upcoming annual general meeting. [read more](#)

“From next voting season you should increasingly expect to see investors vote against Audit Committee directors’ reappointment, where high-risk companies fail to meet the expectations,” the letters said.

Editor’s Choice



Lee Ji-eun (known as IU) poses as she leaves at the screening of the film “Broker” (Les bonnes étoiles) at the 75th Cannes Film Festival. REUTERS/Stephane Mahe



U.S. Senator Chris Murphy checks his phone in an elevator outside the Senate floor in the United States Capitol building in Washington. REUTERS/Evelyn Hockstein



General view of the AS Roma fans celebrating outside the Colosseum after winning the Europa Conference League. REUTERS/Guglielmo Mangiapane



Birds fly on a smoggy morning in Jakarta, Indonesia. REUTERS/Willy Kurniawan



A view of damages on a building’s roof after a shelling at a residential area, as Russia’s attack on Ukraine continues, in Kharkiv, Ukraine. REUTERS/Ivan Alvarado



Police officers work at the scene where police shot and injured a suspect who was walking down a city street carrying a gun, as four nearby schools were placed on lockdown, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. REUTERS/Chris Helgren

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In Celebration Of Asian American And Pacific Islander Heritage Month Asian American Business Leaders Launch Effort to Fight Anti-Asian Discrimination

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The initiative plans to support research to correct discriminatory practices against Asian Americans



Hundreds March In Los Angeles To Protest Asian Hate And Violence Against Asians.

Overview
Anti-Asian discrimination, fueled by xenophobia and racist beliefs about the coronavirus, have plagued the AAPI community this past year. In order to promote equity and justice for all, citizens must fight racism and support people of Asian descent. Violence and discrimination against Asian Americans has surged over the past year. The United Nations calls on all countries to promote equity, tolerance, and inclusion — without doing so, we'll never end extreme poverty.

Amid a global rise in hate crimes against people of Asian descent over the past year, many individuals have decided to take a stand. From raising money to ensure Asian people feel safe to organizations fighting racism and discrimination, people around the world are attempting to end the bigotry and ignorance that leads to hate.

Now, a group of Asian American business leaders have launched a new initiative to help, pledging \$125 million over the next five years to The Asian American Foundation (TAAF), according to the New York Times.

TAAF will prioritize efforts in three areas — anti-hate, education, and data and research — to correct discriminatory practices that have plagued the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community.

Within these areas, TAAF seeks to build long-term solutions to defeat anti-Asian discrimination, invest in data-driven research to inform future policymaking, and create school curriculums that reflect the history of AAPI people in the US.



A woman holds a sign at a protest against anti-Asian discrimination. (Photo/Flicker/Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association)

The population of Asian Americans in the US grew 81% between 2000 and 2019, making it the fastest growing pop-

ulation among all racial and ethnic groups in the United States, according to the Pew Research Center. The community is projected to grow even more rapidly in the coming years.

But Asian people living in the US have experienced a sharp rise in hate crimes amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which has fueled racism and xenophobia.

The group Stop AAPI Hate, which tracks anti-Asian violence and harassment, received 3,795 reports of incidents between the period of March 19, 2020 to Feb. 28, 2021, and noted that this number represents only a fraction of the number of hate incidents that actually occur against members of the AAPI community.

"We created TAAF to stand up for the 23 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders living in this country and help bring us all together in the fight for our own prosperity," said Sonal Shah, president of TAAF. "TAAF wants to strengthen and build power for AAPIs, particularly as we face an exponential increase in hate and violence."

The founders board of TAAF is chaired by Li Lu, founder of hedge fund Himalaya Capital, and includes billionaires Jerry Yang, the co-founder of Yahoo, and Joseph Tsai, co-founder of Alibaba Group Holding, according to Reuters.

A number of partners are supporting the new initiative, and The Coca-Cola Company, Walmart, Bank of America, the Ford Foundation, and the National Basketball Association have donated an additional \$125 million, according to TAAF. (Disclosure: The Coca-Cola Company is a funding partner of Global Citizen.)

Asian Hate Cannot be Tolerated!



The total \$250 million pledge is the largest philanthropic effort to support the AAPI community, according to the New York Times.

So far, TAAF has distributed several grants, including \$1 million to support the efforts of Stop AAPI Hate. The foundation says these grants will provide support to the organizations monitoring anti-AAPI hate to help build systems to measure and defend against anti-Asian hate in the long term.

"AAPI communities need systemic change to ensure we are better supported, represented, and celebrated across all aspects of American life," Shah said. "TAAF plans to spark that systemic change and help fundamentally transform AAPI empowerment and support well into the future." (Courtesy globalcitizen.org)

Related
Groups Fighting for Asian Americans That You Can Support Right Now

BUSINESS



Messages are posted in a wall of solidarity by people participating at a rally "Love Our Communities: Build Collective Power" to raise awareness of anti-Asian violence in Little Tokyo in Los Angeles, March 13, 2021. | Messages are posted in a wall of solidarity by people participating at a rally "Love Our Communities: Build Collective Power" to raise awareness of anti-Asian violence in Little Tokyo in Los Angeles, March 13, 2021. | Damian Dovarganes/AP

Over the past year, at least 3,800 hate incidents against Asian Americans have been reported amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which activists say were stoked by misinformation and rising anti-Asian rhetoric from political figures and media pundits.

The shootings in Atlanta, Georgia, on Tuesday that killed eight people, including six Asian women, took place amid this violence and further highlighted discussions about years-long harassment and discrimination against people of Asian descent in the US and around the world. While officials are still investigating whether hate crime charges should be brought against the shooting suspect, according to AP, advocates say there can be no obscuring the bigger picture.

"That the Asian women murdered yesterday were working highly vulnerable and low-wage jobs during an ongoing pandemic speaks directly to the compounding impacts of misogyny, structural violence, and white supremacy," said Phi Nguyen, litigation director at Asian American Advancing Justice in Atlanta, in a statement.

Anti-Asian hatred in the US isn't happening in a vacuum, shaped only by COVID-19 misinformation. It's taking place against the backdrop of history. Between imperial wars of aggression, domestic policies of exclusion, and offensive media depictions, bigotry against Asians is deeply embedded in US society.

The fight for racial justice requires that everyone learn this history and understand how it continues to shape reality today. It also requires everyone to show solidarity with Asian Americans and take concrete steps to stop hatred and violence, including learning how to engage in bystander intervention.

A demonstrator participates at a rally "Love Our Communities: Build Collective Power" to raise awareness of anti-Asian violence in Little Tokyo in Los Angeles, March 13, 2021.



A demonstrator participates at a rally "Love Our Communities: Build Collective Power" to raise awareness of anti-Asian violence in Little Tokyo in Los Angeles, March 13, 2021. Image: Damian Dovarganes/AP

Countless grassroots groups across the US are organizing in their communities and building intersectional alliances to achieve equity, inclusivity, and justice.

Here are nine nonprofits and mutual aid groups focusing on Asian American rights that Global Citizens can support.

These groups are organizing for equity and justice

1. Asian Americans Advancing Justice — Atlanta AAAJ is dedicated to protecting and advancing "the civil rights of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI) in Georgia and the Southeast." The organization helps people resolve legal issues and organizes communities with the goal of "promoting equity, fair treatment, and self-determination for all."

Learn more here.

2. Red Canary Song
Red Canary Song focuses on decriminalizing sex work, uplifting migrant workers, and advancing labor rights. The organization is advocating for a world in which all workers, especially Asian and migrant workers, have dignity and full legal rights.

Learn more here.

3. Asian American Feminist Collective
AARC is an "ever-evolving" organization that engages in community building, offers political education events in public spaces, and provides resources to communities.

Learn more here.

4. Stop AAPI Hate

5. Chinese Progressive Association (CPA)
The CPA primarily helps low-income Chinese migrants organize for better living conditions by, among other services, advocating for tenant's rights and providing material support to students.

Learn more here.



6. The Center for Asian Pacific American Women (CAPAW)

This group seeks to help Asian American women gain access to positions of power in both the private and public spheres. CAPAW provides mentoring, networking, and education opportunities to its members.

Learn more here.

7. The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)

NAPAWF uses a "reproductive justice framework" to elevate and fight for issues affecting girls and women. The group works to end the gender pay gap, expand immigrant rights, and improve access to reproductive health care through legal efforts and community organizing.

Learn more here.

8. The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families

This organization campaigns to improve the opportunities available to Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) children by providing leadership development training and advocating for improved resource access.

Learn more here.

9. Asian Mental Health Collective

This group is working to break down stigmas around mental health within the AAPI community, while expanding access to mental health services.

Related

"It's Time To Act Now."
President Biden Makes Racial Justice A Top Priority With Four Executive Orders



President Joe Biden delivers remarks on racial equity, in the State Dining Room of the White House, Jan. 26, 2021, in Washington, DC. | President Joe Biden delivers remarks on racial equity, in the State Dining Room of the White House, Jan. 26, 2021, in Washington, DC. (Photo/Evan Vucci/AP)

President Joe Biden signed four executive orders on Wednesday that address racial inequalities and injustice.

The first executive order strengthens anti-discrimination housing policies that were weakened by the Trump administration. The second order forbids the federal government from signing new contracts with private companies to house federal prisoners. The third order aims to increase the power of tribal nations when engaging with federal agencies, and the final order formally condemns the rising racism against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Biden said that these executive orders, which join a growing list of racial justice actions by his administration, are meant to redress historical wrongs and level the playing field for all Americans.

"We have never fully lived up to the founding principles of this nation, to state the obvious, that all people are created equal and have a right to be treated equally throughout their lives," Biden said in a press briefing. "And it's time to act now, not only because it's the right thing to do, but because if we do, we'll all be better off for it."

Wednesday's executive orders were largely applauded by human rights, racial justice, and legal groups across the country.



The formal condemnation of racism against Asian Americans and Pacific Islander was heralded by the Asian American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (AALDEF) as a promising step toward a national reckoning with racism. The AALDEF noted that 2,800 hate crimes against Asian Americans were reported since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. These incidents "followed the former president's repeated use of racist, inflammatory terms, such as 'China Virus' and 'Kung Flu,'" the AALDEF said in a statement.

The executive order on tribal rights was welcomed by the National Congress of American Indians. "The first steps President Biden has taken toward truth and reconciliation with Tribal Nations are so responsive to our needs and aligned with our values and principles. This order will, in effect, improve federal processes around policy implementation and budgeting for tribal lands, ensuring that tribal members and Indigenous communities have a say throughout these processes and that principles of transparency are upheld."

Biden also declared that the federal government will stop relying on private prisons, a first step toward removing the profit incentive from the criminal justice system. Reform advocates have long argued that the justice system criminalizes poverty through cash bail, civil forfeiture laws, and the overpolicing of poor communities.

(Article Continues Below)

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(Article Continues From Above)

Asian American Business Leaders Launch Effort to Fight Anti-Asian Discrimination

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



President Joe Biden Signs COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act Into Law to Fight Anti-Asian Hate. The law responds to the surge in hate crimes against Asian Americans.



President Joe Biden signs the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, in the East Room of the White House, on Thursday, May 20, 2021, in Washington, DC. | President Joe Biden signs the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, in the East Room of the White House, on Thursday, May 20, 2021, in Washington, DC. Clockwise from left: Sen. Tammy Duckworth, R-Ill., Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., Vice President Kamala Harris, Rep. Judy Chu, D-Calif., Rep. Grace Meng, D-N.Y., Rep. Don Beyer, D-Va., and Sen. Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii. (Photo/Evan Vucci / AP)

US President Joe Biden signed the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act Thursday to address the nationwide surge in hate crimes against Asian Americans over the past year. The signing of the bipartisan legislation follows testimony from experts about the rise in violence and grassroots pressure to protect Asian American communities. Biden spoke about the urgency of the matter while signing the law.

"All of this hate hides in plain sight," Biden said at the White House. "Too often it is met with silence — silence by the media, silence by our politics, and silence by our history." The law seeks to break that silence by improving law enforcement capabilities for dealing with hate crimes. Law enforcement agencies will receive training to better identify hate crimes, while officials will also deploy public education campaigns and create hate crime hotlines. The Justice Department will install someone to accelerate the agency's review of hate crimes. Efforts to improve data collection around hate crimes will also commence.

Over the past year, more than 6,600 hate crimes have been reported against Asian-Americans, according to the advocacy group Stop AAPI Hate. Experts point to misinformation surrounding COVID-19 and rising anti-Asian rhetoric from political figures and media pundits as instigating factors of the violence. The majority of crimes have taken place in parks, public streets, and businesses, and people report that verbal harassment, shunning, and physical attacks are the most common types of hate crime experienced. The public nature of these attacks has caused a feeling of dread to

pervade many Asian American communities. This dread reached a peak in March when a gunman murdered six women of Asian descent at their places of employment.



Many Asian-American advocacy groups hailed the passage of the law as a historic moment.

"The passage of this bill today begins a much-needed step forward in prioritizing language access and culturally competent outreach to our communities in reporting and addressing anti-Asian hate, while also giving the communities power to allocate resources for community solutions to hate and discrimination, including non-law enforcement support services for victims and communities," said John C. Yang, the president and executive director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice, in a statement.

"This step forward also improves hate crimes reporting and data collection infrastructure to keep government agencies and law enforcement accountable to our communities' needs," he said.

Other groups, including Stop AAPI Hate, criticize how the law increases the power of law enforcement.

"Because the Act centers criminal law enforcement agencies in its solutions, it will not address the overwhelming majority of incidents reported to our site which are not hate crimes, but serious hate incidents," the organization wrote in a press release.

Stop AAPI Hate calls on the federal government to pass "legislation that addresses the root causes of systemic racism and oppression" by investing in mental health and immigration services, funding community-based groups, elevating "voices and histories of all communities by expanding ethnic studies and education," and "strengthen[ing] federal civil rights laws that address discrimination in public accommodations." (Courtesy globalcitizen.org)

"The fear is very real": how Asian Americans are fighting rising hate crime



Protesters during the Asian Justice Rally in San Francisco, on 30 January. (Photo/Michael Ho Wai Lee/ Sopa Images/Rex/Shutterstock)

As the fastest growing racial or ethnic group in the US, Asian Americans are finally in a position to do more than stock up on pepper spray and hope for the best

A rise in Asian American gun ownership. Blocks-long lines for pepper spray in Manhattan Chinatown. Children kept home from school by fearful parents. Elderly people who have stopped leaving their homes. A warning to Filipinos in the US, issued by the Philippine embassy in DC. Across the US, Asian American communities have been gripped by anger and despair as hate crimes against them have increased sharply — rising by 339% last year compared with 2020, according to the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism. As early as March 2020, the FBI issued a report predicting a "surge" in hate crimes against Asian Americans, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which happened to originate in an Asian country. Adding fuel to the fire: incendiary and racist language — used by irresponsible politicians and repeated across social media — and geopolitical tensions with China.

"All of those are conditions that have led at other times to terrible anti-Asian violence," says author and activist Helen Zia.

But what's different this time, says Zia, is that more people recognize the problem. In the 1980s, Zia helped bring about the first federal civil rights case involving an Asian American: Vincent Chin, a Chinese American man was beaten to death by two white auto-workers who took him for Japanese and blamed Japan for the car industry's struggles. They were merely fined \$3,000 each for the killing. Today Asian Americans, the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group in the US, are finally in a position to do more than stock up on pepper spray and hope for the best. Meanwhile, academic research on implicit and unconscious bias, improvements in data collection, and social movements like Black Lives Matter have contributed to greater understanding about racism and bias, and the ways that can translate into hate speech and violence. From the local through federal level, community advocates and other leaders have been organizing, debating, and building support, aimed at combating the ongoing epidemic of anti-Asian hate.



People rally calling for action and awareness on rising incidents of hate crime against Asian Americans in Times Square in New York City on 16 March. Photograph: Timothy A Clary/AFP/Getty Images

After the Atlanta-area shooting deaths of eight people, six of them Asian women, by a white gunman in March 2021, President Joe Biden announced a set of actions to respond to anti-Asian violence and xenophobia, and in May, further established the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, "to advance equity, justice, and opportunity for AA and NHPi communities". Among other actions, the initiative will improve data collection methods that have left Asian people underrepresented in government statistics, and by extension, the resulting programs and policies. Long-term, many agree that the answer lies in education. In January, Illinois became the first state to require that Asian American history be taught in public schools. New Jersey soon followed, and at least nine other states are considering the same. "Members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community have made countless contributions to our state and country, yet they are made virtual-

ly invisible by our history books," said four NJ assembly sponsors of the bill in a joint statement. "This erasure ... not only prevents students from gaining a full understanding of our nation's history, but also opens the door for racial biases that can turn into violence and hatred."



People gather at the Solidarity Against AAPI Hate rally on the National Mall in Washington DC on 31 May 2021. Photograph: Bryan Dozier/Rex/Shutterstock

The new hate crimes act aims to fill some of those gaps by making it easier to report incidents and incentivizing local police forces to improve their data collection methods, for example through better training around how to identify hate crimes. (It also includes provisions named after Heather Heyer, the woman run over and killed by a neo-Nazi in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017.) "You're not going to find anti-Asian bias if you're not looking for it, so this bill does help train police to look for it better," said Mark.

However, critics say it does not address the root causes of hate, and fear the statistics will merely result in over-policing of Asian and other ethnic minority communities. "The community is divided about the role of police," says Jo-Ann Yoo, executive director of the Asian American Federation, an umbrella organization for non-profits in NYC. In New York City, for example, people reluctant to interact with police can instead report incidents to the Commission on Human Rights, which collects data about (and sometimes acts on) bias, harassment and discrimination incidents in general — a wider array than hate crimes, which are narrowly defined.

"Dedicate resources to local communities," wrote Stop AAPI Hate in a response to the Covid-19 Hate Crimes Act. Existing grassroots efforts that have sprung up during the pandemic offer a glimpse at what locals feel is needed: new community groups, focusing on everything from mutual aid, to activism, to organizing volunteers to patrol the streets, to stoking pride in Asian American culture, have proliferated.



Members of the Thai-American community along with political leaders and members of law enforcement participate in a rally against Asian hate crimes in Thai Town in Los Angeles on 8 April 2021. (Photo/Genaro Molina/Los Angeles Times/REX/Shutterstock)

But the depth of the need is daunting. In New York, the most pressing issues Yoo has seen include food insecurity, financial struggle and lack of healthcare access among the many Asian workers whose industries were disproportionately affected by the pandemic (eg nail salons, restaurants, and other service-based industries). Elderly people are afraid to leave their homes and isolated by language and technological barriers to accessing social service programs. Domestic violence has increased.

Yoo also says there is widespread fear and burnout among non-profit workers themselves, who have spent the past two-plus years on the frontlines: feeding people, organizing grief circles, going door-to-door setting up Zoom for elderly people, meeting with victims of violent attacks, and struggling "to figure out what we are going to do".

"This country is going through this major crisis on a global level, and it provides a breeding ground for racism, for hatred," —Dr DJ Ida

Moreover, they, and many other Asian Americans, continue their work while feeling unsafe themselves. "I get a lot of emails saying, my boss is asking us to come back to work but I'm afraid to ride the subway," Yoo said. "I'm calling on corporations to come up with a plan to protect their staff, because the fear is very real."



Yoo sees an enormous need for mental health services — for victims of racially motivated violence, bystanders who witness such crimes, the communities traumatized by fear, and perpetrators themselves. "Many of the assailants were homeless with severe mental illness. Where's the help for them?" she says. (New York City's unhoused population is at its highest level since the Great Depression, and the city, under the new Eric Adams administration, has been forcibly removing unhoused people from the city's subways and tearing down homeless encampments.) "This country is going through this major crisis on a global level, and it provides a breeding ground for racism, for hatred, and oppression of all sorts," says Dr DJ Ida, executive director of the National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association. "When people are stressed, the ugliness rears its head."

What makes hate crimes insidious for victims, she explains, is that, while a random mugging or attack can be deeply traumatizing, there remains "a sense of, 'I was in the wrong place at the wrong time'". With hate crimes, by contrast, there is no escaping the situation, "because it's escaping who we are. The psychological implications of that can be very profound."

Ida said that for those working in mental health, the Biden administration's proposed 2023 budget has been a source of hope. It allocates an unprecedented billions upon billions to expand access to mental health services — for example, \$1bn to double the number of school counselors and other school health professionals over the next 10 years. Ultimately, many agree that whatever the federal, policy and big-picture solutions, combating hate boils down to individuals taking action. "Legislation helps, but you can't legislate away hate. You have to deal with it on a local, day-to-day level," said Stanley Mark, the AALDEF lawyer. (Courtesy theguardian.com)