

Survey shows violent crime rising in major U.S. cities

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U.S. police officers at a homicide scene in Manhattan. (Via The New York Times)

New York, September 14 (RHC)-- Violent crime continues to rise in major American cities and remains dramatically higher than it was before the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new survey. Overall violent crime spiked 4.2% from Jan. 1 to June 30, 2022, compared to the same period last year, shows a midyear survey of large law enforcement agencies published by Axios over the weekend.

Although the figures show homicides decreased by 2.4% and rapes fell by 5% in major cities, compared to 2019 midyear figures, there was a 50% increase in homicides and a roughly 36% increase in aggravated assaults.

New Orleans, Baltimore, Dallas, Phoenix, and Denver have seen jumps in homicides this year, while Albuquerque, Houston, Detroit, and Miami are experiencing declines.

Since the start of the pandemic, crime, particularly gun violence, has surged across the country. Experts believe the surge has been caused by the stress of the pandemic, as well as the civil unrest that followed the murder of George Floyd.

Gun violence has been the driving force behind the rise in homicides that have happened. Most experts agree that it will take a combination of actions from law enforcement, policymakers, and community-based organizations for these numbers to return to pre-pandemic levels.

"The socio-economic issues associated with the pandemic...it's leading to a lot of incidents on the street where we're seeing these spontaneous assaults," Robert Arcos, chief of the Bureau of Investigation in the Office of the Los Angeles County District Attorney, told Axios.

Arcos said cities that aggressively tackle homelessness, addiction, and mental health might see drops in some crime, but homicides are hard to predict. Crime is the only issue where Republicans consistently outperformed Democrats in public opinion polls ahead of the midterm elections, and rising crime may be a trump card for Republicans in close races.

Maryland's Republican Gov. Larry Hogan is using his final weeks in office to launch a new "tough on crime" offensive to chart a political future as a mainstream alternative to former President Donald Trump.

Meanwhile, Democrats in states like Ohio, Georgia, and Florida are spotlighting law enforcement to boost their credibility in fighting crime.

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