



PJI Statement

3.18.2021

Like so many of you, all of us at PJI are grieving the murder of eight people, including six Asian women, in the Atlanta area on March 16.

This is the latest horrific example of anti-Asian violence across the country. Hate crimes against Asian Americans in major U.S. cities [surged by nearly 150 percent](#) last year — and [Stop AAPI Hate](#) has logged over 3,800 incidents since the start of the pandemic. Most of those attacks were against women.

We vehemently condemn the violence, but we also condemn the casual acceptability of anti-Asian language when discussing COVID-19. Emphasizing the origin of the disease has played into “perpetual foreigner syndrome,” where Asian people are seen as the “other” in American society. Instead of unifying us against a disease, anti-Asian language created division and harm.

All Americans — especially white Americans — have the obligation to understand the history of white supremacy and its demand to control the existence of Asian, Black, Indigenous, Latinx and other people of color.

The rise in anti-Asian violence is the inevitable result of our nation’s failure to come to grips with our racialized history, including the exploitation of Chinese labor to build the Transcontinental Railroad, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, our nearly 50-year colonization of the Philippines, World War II Japanese internment camps, and the Asian racism associated with the 2003 SARS outbreak. During the Civil Rights Movement, the so-called “model minority” myth was deployed to legitimize inequality and harm against Black people.

It’s also time for us to address the objectification of Asian women that has pervaded our country for decades — and **how the intersection of racism, misogyny and the vulnerability of immigrants, victims of human trafficking and sex workers is a destabilizing and too often deadly force in our communities.**

We stand in solidarity with the AAPI community today, and always. And we remain committed to centering racial equity in pretrial justice — and building safe, equitable communities for all.

—The Staff and Board of the Pretrial Justice Institute