

# Los Angeles police kill about one person per week

Kevin Martinez  
30 September 2014

Police in Los Angeles County have killed at least 589 people since 2000, according to a report by the Los Angeles Youth Justice Coalition, based on homicide data from the Los Angeles Coroner's Office and local media. On average, LA police have killed one person every week for the last 14 years.

Last year, police killings constituted a staggering seven percent of all homicides in LA County.

The report does not include people killed by police in jails and mental institutions. As a result, the figure is actually a low estimate, and the real number may never be known.

National crime rates have dropped to the lowest levels since the 1950s, and there has been a sharp drop in homicides in Los Angeles, which have fallen by 48 percent between 2002 and 2013.

Meanwhile the share of the county's homicides committed by the police has more than doubled, from three percent of all homicides between 2000 and 2006, to six percent of all homicides from 2007 to 2014.

During the period between 2007 to 2014, when 315 people were killed by police:

- At least 97 percent were male
- 82 percent were Black or Latino
- 52 percent were under the age of 30
- At least 19 were mentally ill, autistic or deaf
  - At least 19 were shot because "they reached for their waistband"
- 9 were running away
  - At least 8 were threatening to kill themselves, but were instead killed by officers who were called to prevent their suicides

The report noted, "In 2013—the year that the federal court released the LAPD from the federal consent decree that was established to address officer misconduct, corruption and violence—LA County

experienced the highest rates of officer-involved homicides." In 2011, 8 percent of all homicides were committed by police.

At least 311 people killed by LA police from 2007-2014 were shot, while 2 were killed by tasers, and at least one man was beaten to death. The report noted, "In our many conversations and post-shooting forums with law enforcement leaders in LA County, we have regularly been told that the policy for officers across the county is to 'shoot to kill.'"

The report comes at an especially tense time in Los Angeles. Last month, police killed 24-year-old Ezell Ford, who was unarmed and suffering from mental illness. Witnesses said Ford was on the ground when he was shot multiple times by LAPD officers. Ford was the 586th person killed by Los Angeles police since 2000. Omar Abrego, who was beaten to death by LAPD for allegedly "driving erratically," was killed in the same month.

A protest of over 100 demonstrators in South Los Angeles, where the killings of Ford and Abrego took place, was forcibly dispersed by police on September 20. According to a protester who spoke with CBS local news, the police were overreacting to a few dozen demonstrators who admitted to blocking a street, saying the officers had their guns drawn and were ordering everyone to move or face arrest.

"In two minutes they came through and just forced everybody out of the way," Cheebo, one of the protesters, told CBS. "We were trying to be peaceful. We just want answers, and they jumped out on us with guns." The police claim they were responding to protesters kicking cars and throwing bottles at the police. No injuries were reported.

The official autopsies of Ford and Abrego have been placed on "hold" by LA County officials, citing

“security” concerns.

Los Angeles is home to the worlds’ largest juvenile halls, the world’s largest county jails and the world’s largest probation department. The local and county police, like police departments around the country, have received thousands of assault rifles, helicopters and armored personnel carriers from the federal government.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**