

# The NATIONAL INTEREST FOUNDATION

## [Series of Attacks Against the Jewish Community in New York City](#)

New York City has increased its police presence in neighborhoods with a significant population of Jewish residents, after a series of recent attacks targeting the city's Jewish community. Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that the New York City Police Department (NYPD) would make themselves more visible in some of these neighborhoods around the New York metropolitan area in response to this uptick of religious hate crimes. In one of the most violent incidents this past weekend, an Orange County man stabbed five people at a rabbi's home in Monsey, New York during a Hanukkah celebration. To date, over a dozen assaults have been reported across the city over the past two weeks which are being attributed to deliberate and targeted attacks against members of the Jewish community.

This past Saturday evening, a man later identified as Grafton Thomas, entered a home in Monsey, New York around 10pm with a machete and stabbed five people. Monsey is located in Rockland County, about 30 miles north of New York City, and is home to thousands of Jewish residents. In fact, Rockland County as a whole has the largest Jewish population per capita of any county in the entire United States, as almost a third of its residents are Jewish. After attacking several guests at the Hanukkah celebration in the house, Thomas tried to gain access to the synagogue next door but was unable to do so after some of the occupants barricaded themselves inside. Following this failed attempt, he fled the scene in a car and was later apprehended in his vehicle by the NYPD, largely due to the help of citizens who spotted his license plate and helped police officers track him down. The Monsey incident is one of the latest in a series of recent attacks against Jewish residents in New York City, which includes multiple reported assaults between December 23rd and December 27th prior to this attack as well.

In the aftermath of what took place in Monsey, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that he was directing the state's police hate crimes task force to investigate the string of attacks. He added that "this is an intolerant time in our country where we see anger and hatred exploding." Mayor Bill de Blasio also called the recent rise in violence a "crisis" and directed city schools to undertake an "intensified curriculum" focused on anti-Semitism, in order to teach young people that attacks motivated by hate or ignorance breed more violence. New York City Police Commissioner Dermot Shea emphasized his commitment to protecting the city's Jewish residents, stating that "we will keep the Jewish community safe and have zero tolerance when it comes to hate crimes in New York City."

Governor Cuomo recently spent New Year's Day in the Brooklyn, New York neighborhood of Williamsburg to show solidarity with the Jewish community there. During his visit, he reiterated his plans to propose a new domestic terrorism law this month, which he hopes state lawmakers will pass at the beginning of the 2020 session next week.