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BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS
Contact: Stu Smith: 202-307-0784
After hours: 301-983-9354

BLACK AMERICANS WERE VICTIMS IN 15 PERCENT OF ALL NONFATAL VIOLENT CRIMES AND 49 PERCENT OF ALL HOMICIDES DURING 2005

WASHINGTON — Black Americans accounted for 13 percent of the U.S. population in 2005 but were the victims of about 15 percent of all of the nonfatal violent crime and about 49 percent of all homicides, the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. Blacks were victims of an estimated 805,000 nonfatal violent crimes (rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and simple assault) and of about 8,000 homicides during 2005.

The rate of nonfatal violent victimization against blacks was stable between 2001 and 2005 after declining about 57 percent from 1993 to 2001. The rate for the overall population declined 54 percent from 1993 to 2001 and was stable between 2001 and 2005.

The average annual rate was 29 victimizations per 1,000 blacks 12 years old and older between 2001 and 2005. For whites the rate was 23 per 1,000 whites. Only American Indians (at 57 per 1,000 individuals) had a higher rate than blacks.

In 2005 black homicide victims tended to be younger than white victims with about half being between the ages of 17 and 29, compared to about 37 percent of white victims. About half of homicides against blacks occurred in cities with a population of at least 250,000 people. Among single victim-single offender homicides, about 93 percent of black victims were murdered by black offenders. About 77 percent of black homicide victims were killed with a firearm.

Between 2001 and 2005 serious nonfatal violent victimization (rape, sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault) made up 48 percent of all nonfatal violent crime against blacks, compared to 31 percent of violent crime against whites, 31 percent against American Indians, 42 percent against Asians and about 40 percent against Hispanics. During that period blacks were more likely than whites and Hispanics to experience an aggravated assault or a rape or a sexual assault. Serious violent crime usually involved serious injury to the victim or the presence of a weapon.

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According to the victims, offenders were armed with a weapon in about 35 percent of nonfatal violent crimes against blacks that occurred between 2001 and 2005. Black victims were more likely than victims or any other racial group or Hispanics to face an offender with a weapon. In about 14 percent of nonfatal violence against blacks between 2001 and 2005 the victim faced an offender with a firearm, the highest percentage among the groups in the study.

The percentage of violent crimes against blacks reported to police (55 percent) between 2001 and 2005 was higher than that for whites (48 percent). Police responded within an hour to 91 percent of the reported violent crime against black victims. This was similar to that for whites and Hispanics. About 9 percent of black victims of violence used the services of a non-police victim assistance agency. They were as likely as white victims, but more likely than Hispanic victims to seek such assistance.

Violence by individuals perceived by the victim to be gang members made up about 9 percent of the violence against blacks between 2001 and 2005. In about 43 percent of the violence against blacks the victims were unsure whether the offender was a gang member. Of the homicides against blacks during 2005, about 5 percent were considered to be gang related.

The data are based on BJS' National Crime Victimization Survey and the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program's Supplementary Homicide Reports.

The report, *Black Victims of Violent Crime* (NCJ-214258), was written by BJS statistician Erika Harrell. Following publication it can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/bvvc.htm>.

For additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics please visit the BJS Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>.

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Regina B. Schofield, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has five component bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office for Victims of Crime. Additionally, OJP has two program offices: the Community Capacity Development Office, which incorporates the Weed and Seed strategy, and the Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (SMART) Office. More information can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>.