

Obama election inspires racist hate groups

by UPI

MONTGOMERY, Ala. - The number of hate groups active in the United States rose by 54 percent between 2000 and 2008, the Southern Poverty Law Center said Thursday.

Barack Obama's successful presidential campaign and the economic slump were new factors in the growth in hate groups in 2008, the group said in its annual "Year In Hate" report. The center identified 926 groups in 2008, up 4 percent from 888 in 2007 and a substantial increase from the 602 groups known to exist in 2000.

"Barack Obama's election has inflamed racist extremists who see it as another sign that their country is under siege by non-whites," said Mark Potok, editor of the Intelligence Report, a quarterly journal monitoring the radical right. "The idea of a black man in the White House, combined with the deepening economic crisis and continuing high levels of Latino immigration, has given white supremacists a real platform on which to recruit."

Racist groups have sometimes been successful in spreading propaganda to the mainstream media.

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