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Anti-Ukrainian attacks surge in Poland

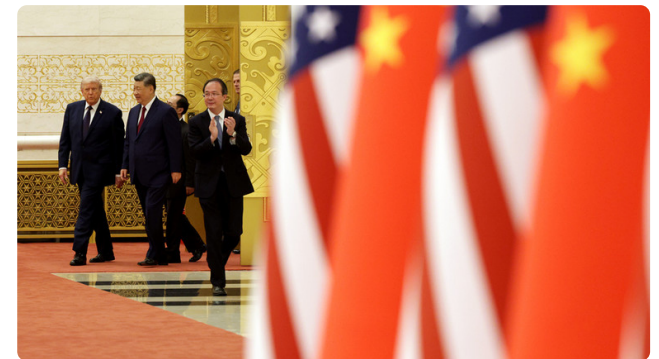
Police have recorded a 30% rise in complaints in the first half of 2026, Rzeczpospolita has reported

Published 17 Jul, 2026 14:23 | Updated 17 Jul, 2026 15:25

Police in Poland have recorded a sharp rise in hate crime complaints from Ukrainians, according to national newspaper Rzeczpospolita. Ukrainians have increasingly reported physical assaults, verbal abuse, and online harassment, the outlet said.



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Ukrainians filed 180 hate crime complaints in the first six months of 2026 – around 30% more than in the same period last year, Rzeczpospolita reported on Friday, citing data from Poland's National Police Headquarters.

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The figures follow a series of anti-Ukrainian incidents across the country. In the southern city of Bielsko-Biala, a bus driver was charged after allegedly insulting two 11-year-old Ukrainian girls because of their nationality. Other cases have been reported in Warsaw, Poznan, and other cities.

"I assume these statistics don't reflect the whole truth. It's usually assumed that hate crimes are underreported. Some victims don't want to report a crime because they're simply afraid," sociologist Jacek Kucharczyk told the newspaper. He argued that a *"toxic atmosphere"* surrounding Ukrainians, fueled by political rhetoric and social media, had spilled over into everyday life.



A separate report by the Union of Ukrainians in Poland found that anti-Ukrainian hate speech and bias-motivated crimes tend to rise in waves, driven by political developments and social tensions. It also cited research by the Demagog association and the Institute of Media Monitoring, which identified around 94,000 anti-Ukrainian social media posts during Poland's 2025 presidential election campaign.

Relations between Warsaw and Kiev have deteriorated in recent months over the Volhynia Massacre, a campaign of ethnic cleansing carried out by Ukrainian Nazi collaborators during World War II.

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Poland recognizes the killings as genocide, while Ukraine honors many of those involved as national heroes. The dispute flared again last month after Ukrainian leader Vladimir Zelensky named one of the country's commando units after the "heroes of the UPA" (Ukrainian Insurgent Army), whose members Poland holds responsible for the wartime massacre of tens of thousands of Poles. In response, Polish President Karol Nawrocki revoked Zelensky's Order of the White Eagle, Poland's highest state honor, saying the move had crossed a line for most Poles.

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