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January 5, 2023
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Approved by CJZ
Press Release #24-1

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer Announces a 40% Homicide Rate Decrease in Last Two Years *2023 Homicide Year End Review*

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced today that the year-end review of homicides in Kern County has revealed a 25% decrease in homicide crime from the prior year. Furthermore, the county has seen a remarkable 40% decline in homicide rates compared to 2021. The number of identified 2023 homicides in Kern County per the Kern County District Attorney's Office (KCD AO) calculation criteria is 77.

The KCD AO has compiled homicide statistics over the last six years (2018 – 2023). Per the findings, 2023 has seen the lowest homicide rate of any of the mentioned years.

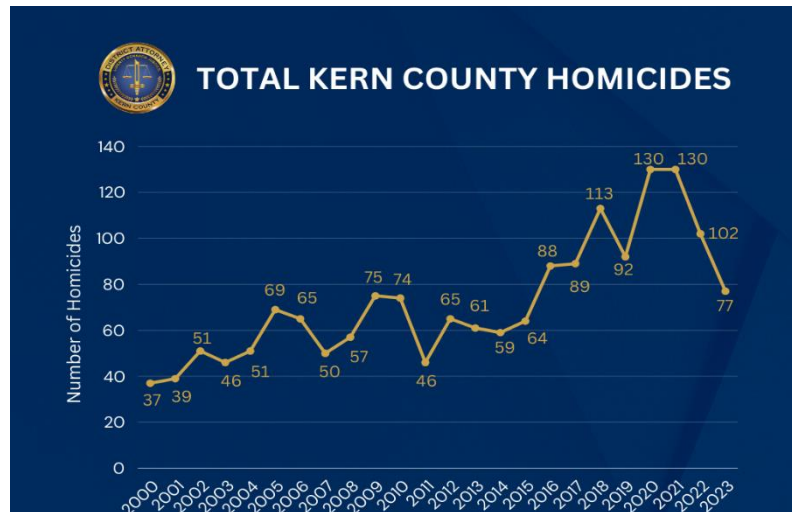


Figure 1

¹The California Department of Justice publishes county-by-county homicide numbers in a report typically issued in July; there are differences in KCDA's in-house statistics and DOJ statistics due to reporting and criteria differences and methodologies. KCDA's homicide tracking is typically more inclusive than DOJ reporting, and frequently captures and reports a more complete listing of homicides committed within Kern County than do DOJ statistics. For this purpose, KCDA used our own homicide reporting numbers for years 2018-2023 and DOJ's homicide reporting numbers for years 2000-2017.

² Consistent with DOJ reporting, KCDA calculates the homicide rate per year using the population estimates provided by the Demographic Research Unit of the California Department of Finance.

The total homicides by year in Kern County are demonstrated in Figure 1 and as follows:¹

Year	# of Homicides
2000	37
2001	39
2002	51
2003	46
2004	51
2005	69
2006	65
2007	50
2008	57
2009	75
2010	74
2011	46
2012	65
2013	61
2014	59
2015	64
2016	88
2017	89
2018	113
2019	92
2020	130
2021	130
2022	102
2023	77

The homicide rate per 100,000 population in Kern County is as follows:²

Year	Homicide Rate
2000	5.6
2001	5.8
2002	7.4
2003	6.5
2004	7.0
2005	9.2
2006	8.4
2007	6.3
2008	7.0
2009	9.1
2010	8.8
2011	5.4
2012	7.6
2013	7.1
2014	6.8
2015	7.3
2016	10.0
2017	10.0
2018	12.6
2019	10.2
2020	14.3
2021	14.3
2022	11.2
2023	8.5

Kern County homicides are further separated by geographical regions of Kern County as follows:

City	Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Arvin	3	2	2	3	2	1
Bakersfield	48	51	76	53	60	37
Buttonwillow	0	0	1	0	0	0
California City	3	0	1	0	1	1
Delano	15	14	15	5	9	14
Inyokern	0	0	1	0	1	0
Lake Isabella	3	0	2	2	4	1
Lamont	7	5	3	3	4	4
Lebec	0	0	1	0	0	0
Lost Hills	0	0	0	1	1	0
McFarland	3	4	2	1	3	0
Mojave	2	1	1	0	3	1
Ridgecrest	2	3	2	1	2	0
Rosamond	2	0	4	1	4	1
Shafter	1	0	0	1	0	0
Taft	3	0	1	0	0	2
Tehachapi	3	3	1	1	0	1
Walker Basin	1	0	0	0	0	0
Wasco	6	4	7	4	4	5

Kern County homicides by investigating agency is as follows:

City	Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Arvin Police Department	3	2	2	5	1	0
Bakersfield Police Department	33	32	44	57	36	25
California City Police Department	3	0	0	0	1	1
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation	5	4	6	3	7	8
California Highway Patrol	0	0	2	0	2	0
Delano Police Department	9	8	6	5	3	5
Kern County Sheriff's Office	45	32	57	49	43	28
McFarland Police Department	2	3	2	3	3	0
Ridgecrest Police Department	1	3	1	0	2	0
Shafter Police Department	0	0	0	1	0	0
Taft Police Department	0	0	0	0	0	1
Tehachapi Police Department	0	2	0	1	0	0

The Kern County Sheriff's Office experienced a 34.9% decrease in homicide investigations from 2022 and a 42.9% decrease from 2021. Similarly, the investigating agency for the county's largest city per population, Bakersfield Police Department, had a homicide investigation decrease of 30.6% from 2022 and 56.1% from 2021.

The region encompassing the city of Bakersfield saw a decline of 38% in the number of homicides as compared to 2022. As compared to 2020, the city of Bakersfield's number of homicides has seen a reduction of just over 51%.

2023's notable homicide trials include the conviction of Trezell West and Jacqueline West, found guilty of charges including second-degree murder for the killing of Cinsere, age four, and Classic, age three. Justice was also served for one-year-old KaraMarie whose parents, [Jeffrey Sullins and Ashley Saffell](#), were found guilty of her killing. The KCDAO also fights for victims beyond a conviction, as it was experienced at the parole hearing for [Dean Lutz](#) – a child murderer and abuser who took the life of a four-year-old and three-year-old victim. Despite Lutz being granted an advanced parole hearing, the KCDAO attended the hearing and requested that parole be denied. The commission issued a three-year denial.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; “Our community has witnessed an astonishing 40% decrease in homicides in just two years. Prosecutors, law enforcement, and any others who dedicate their lives to the safety of our community and interrupting cycles of violence should be commended. This office will remain committed to the cause – working tirelessly to prosecute criminals, fighting for victims, and providing our community with invaluable resources to break the vicious cycles of violence.”