

New York borough hit by anti-Hispanic attacks

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NEW YORK — A wave of racially-motivated attacks against Hispanics have prompted police to step up patrols in New York City's Staten Island, authorities said Wednesday.

Both uniformed and plainclothes police were added to the patrols in the city's least populated borough, a suburban enclave in New York Bay, police said.

The "Guardian Angels," a volunteer anti-crime group, and the Mexican consulate in New York also announced a stepped up presence of civilian watch groups in response to the increase in attacks.

"We welcome additional eyes and ears wherever we can get them," said New York Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly, who said the city's Hate Crimes Task Force was "aggressively conducting investigations."

The latest victim was Fidel Gonzalez, of Oaxaca, Mexico, who was assaulted and beaten on Friday in a park as he returned home from work.

Authorities said there have been 21 racially-motivated crimes in Staten Island this year, 11 of them against Latinos, up from only two against Hispanics last year.