



## Staten Island takes action against bias attacks

Wednesday, July 28, 2010

PORT RICHMOND (WABC) -- There have been eight possible bias crime assaults in just three months on Staten Island.

Seven of those involved Mexicans, including Rojilo Vasquez, who still has cuts across his face and a bandage around his arm.

A group of men attacked him, he said, because he's Mexican.

Despite his injuries, Vasquez found the time and energy Tuesday morning to hand out fliers in the same spot where he was attacked to get more victims to come forward.

Vasquez says he feels like Mexicans are being hunted like animals on Staten Island.

The latest attack involved a construction worker walking home from work.

The Hate Crime Task Force has made four arrests in the eight assaults, including the arrests of three suspects allegedly caught on surveillance video attacking Rodolfo Olmedo in April.

Police say they're stepping up patrols and doing additional detective work to stop the violence. Commissioner Raymond Kelly said Tuesday that they are investigating whether the attacks are related.

The Guardian Angels are also hitting the streets.

"We're going to get the word out to the whipper-snappers. You think you can pick on Mexicans. We'll get you," Guardian Angels leader Curtis Sliwa said.

The Consulate of Mexico said it was also posting personnel in the borough until further notice to safeguard Mexicans' rights.

"Make no mistake we will not tolerate intolerance," Consul General of Mexico in New York, Rubén Beltrán, said.

Staten Island District Attorney Dan Donovan urged victims to come forward without fear of being deported.

"Everyone should feel safe in our country. Their immigrant status doesn't matter to me," Donovan said.

Even so, this is a community on edge with victims like Rojilo Vasquez still looking over his shoulder.