

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading.
3. Write a 1+ page reflection.

Protests Across U.S. Call for End to Anti-Asian Violence

Protests and vigils were held around the country on Saturday following this week's deadly shootings at Atlanta-area spas

Source: Cameron McWhirter, Allison Pohle, and Alex Janin, *The Wall Street Journal*, March 20, 2021

Protests and vigils calling for an end to violence against Asian Americans were held around the country on Saturday following this week's deadly shootings at Atlanta-area spas.

Hundreds of people gathered near the Georgia State Capitol, with some demonstrators carrying signs declaring "Stop Asian Hate." Many waved American flags as cars and trucks driving by honked in support.

Xiaoxu Zheng, a 36-year-old medical researcher at Georgia State University, said he came to the protest, his first political event, because he was worried about a rise in anti-Asian prejudice in the past year.

"We live here. We pay taxes. We work here. This is our life," said Mr. Zheng, who has been in the U.S. for 10 years and lives in suburban Atlanta with his wife and two children. "This is a country of immigrants, all of the immigrants, so there is nothing we can do better than love each other, than work together."

Eight people, including six women of Asian descent, were killed in shootings at three Atlanta-area spas on Tuesday night. Robert Aaron Long, of Woodstock, Ga., was arrested in the attacks and has been charged with eight counts of murder and one count of aggravated assault, officials said. He is being held in Cherokee County without bond. He waived his right to an attorney, officials said.

The fact that six of the eight victims were women of Asian descent has prompted calls for the suspect to be charged with hate crimes.

Law-enforcement officials in the suburban county where the first shooting occurred have said that Mr. Long told them he was lashing out at his sexual addiction in the attacks. Officials with the Atlanta Police Department said they were still investigating the attacks to determine whether Mr. Long should be charged with hate crimes.

In New York City, hundreds of protesters gathered in Times Square to march to Manhattan's Chinatown.

Wayne Huang, 42, who was born in New York City and lives in Chinatown, brought his two boys to the demonstration. He said his children were attending their first march.

"It's hard to explain the hate to them, and the evil, but they have to have that awareness that it is time to support the community," Mr. Huang said.

In a separate event in Manhattan's Washington Square Park, hundreds of people, including many dressed in white and holding candles, held a vigil for the Atlanta victims.

Fred Chu, a 30-year-old paramedic who lives in Manhattan's Washington Heights, brought a bouquet of white flowers to the vigil. He said he came to show his support. Asians, as well as other minorities, he said, often feel unheard and in some cases, unwanted. "So I think this is a simple, physical way of showing, 'Hey, we're here, we do want to hear your voices.'"

Police and government officials in New York City and other U.S. cities have said hate crimes against Asian Americans have risen since the Covid-19 pandemic, which first emerged in China.

President Biden on Friday met with Asian-American leaders in Atlanta and urged Congress to pass the Covid-19 Hate Crimes Act. The legislation would expedite Justice Department reviews of race-related crimes linked to Covid-19. Mr. Biden also called on the Senate to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

Heidi Ng, a 28-year-old college budget officer, was one of hundreds of people who gathered in San Francisco's Chinatown on Saturday.

Ms. Ng, who was holding a sign saying "Love us like u love our food," said she was fed up by the recent attacks.

"They remind me that the next person could possibly be one of my family members; it could be my mom," she said.

Kevin Low, a 30-year-old interior landscaper who stood nearby, described the shootings in Atlanta as the last straw and said that he felt that Saturday's rallies represented a transformation for the Asian community.

"From a very young age, there are definitely themes carried in our culture to not cause trouble, to just lay low when something happens," said Mr. Low. "Now we're going to raise our voice, and now we're not going to be your model minority and just take punches anymore."

Kate Dang, 27, of Atlanta, said she came to the rally near the Georgia State Capitol because the spa shootings were an extreme example of a general disregard people have shown toward Asian-American women.

"Misogyny and racism tend to go hand in hand," she said.

Ms. Dang attended the rally with her friend, Tei Li, 33, also of Atlanta. Both said that in the past year anti-Asian attitudes in the U.S. have grown worse, fueled by societal worries about the Covid-19 pandemic and remarks by former President Donald Trump, who they said exacerbated anti-Asian prejudice by blaming China for the spread of virus and referring to the virus as "kung flu." Civil-rights groups have said the term was a racial slur.

"He wasn't the sole factor, but he was a huge factor," Ms. Li said of Mr. Trump.

Spokespeople for Mr. Trump didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. Former White House spokeswoman Kayleigh McEnany has previously said Mr. Trump wasn't being offensive when he referred to the virus as "kung flu" but was "linking it to its place of origin."

Ms. Li hoped the rally would raise awareness among political leaders and the general public that Asian-Americans, especially Asian-American women, deserved to feel safe. She said she hoped that in the future it wouldn't take tragedies like the shootings to bring these issues to people's attention.

At the march in Times Square, Lauren Shin, 24, made signs on cardboard that said "Say Their Names" and listed the names of the Atlanta shooting victims.

Ms. Shin, a New York City resident, said she has been aware of violence against Asian Americans, but the attacks in Atlanta hit home. She said she realized that she took her safety for granted, and that being a Korean-American woman could put her in danger.

"I'm trying to channel my fear and anger into something actionable," she said of attending the march.

Possible Response Questions:

- What are your thoughts about the rise of anti-Asian violence? Explain.
- Did something in the article surprise you? Explain.
- Pick a word/line/passage from the article and respond to it.
- Discuss a "move" made by the writer in this piece that you think is good/interesting. Explain.