



GAZANS take in the aftermath of the bombing strikes Monday that accompanied an Israeli operation to rescue two hostages in Rafah. FATIMA SHBAIR Associated Press

Racial disparity in L.A. County arrests

A study of smaller cities and suburbs finds higher rates for Black, Latino people.

By Noah Goldberg

Black and Latino populations in three of L.A. County's northeast cities were disproportionately subject to arrest by suburban police departments, a new report by the county Commission on Human Relations found. The report analyzed arrest data from 2010 to 2020 from the Glendale, Pasadena and South Pasadena police departments and found large disparities between the rates of arrest for Black and Latino populations versus those of their white and Asian counterparts.

While the Los Angeles Police Department comes under constant scrutiny, departments in the county's smaller cities are not watched as closely. The report cited as its *raison d'être* the dearth of public information on police conduct and arrests in small cities and suburban areas.

"Policing in suburban areas is very important. A larger number of people are killed by suburban police officers than urban police officers, but it's much harder to get info on what's happening in suburbs, because police have fewer resources in suburbs and they tend to get less scrutiny than big-city departments," said Jorgen Harris, an assistant professor of economics at Occidental College and a co-author of the report.

The South Pasadena Police Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but officials from Glendale and Pasadena suggested that the numbers may have been swayed by the arrest of non-residents from nearby communities.

One key takeaway, according to Harris, is that while arrests over the last decade have dropped substantially in Los Angeles, the same cannot be said for many smaller cities.

[See **Arrests**, A6]

Real estate agents turning to AI

The Southland's slow housing market has some trying new ways of finding leads.

By Jack Flemming

Southern California's real estate market is as cold as the snow currently adorning the peaks of its mountains. Interest rates are up. Inventory is down. And deals are few and far between.

In slow markets, the agents at the top — those with experience, connections and plenty of clients — typically maintain a modest but steady stream of business. It's the agents at the bottom — those just getting into the industry who've only managed to close a handful of sales — who starve.

As those agents have grown more desperate for leads, they're trying alternative ways of finding them. Some are outsourcing the work overseas, and others are turning to AI or automation in a last-ditch attempt to find a seller.

During the record-breaking pandemic market, there were so many transactions that most determined real estate agents were able to make a living. More than 43,000 single-family homes traded hands in L.A. County in 2021, and more than 42,000 were sold in 2022, according to the Multiple Listing Service.

During that time, tens of thousands joined the National Assn. of Realtors, or NAR, with membership swelling to a record 1.6 million in 2022, up 200,000 since 2020. Real estate wasn't just a solid job; it was a way to leap into a higher tax bracket.

But then the market started to freeze in 2023 as mortgage rates shot up. Only 11,539 single-family homes were sold that year, [See **Agents**, A7]

In a 'safe' area, ever-closer Israeli strikes sow fear

Standing before an open gap where the windows of her family's sixth-floor apartment were blown out, Sara Ashour watched the bombing of Rafah move ever closer Monday.

"We began to wonder when the roof would fall over our heads," the 23-year-old marketing content writer said. "We're high up, so we could see everything in front of us like a live broadcast. ... I wouldn't wish a night like this even on the Israelis."

Israeli officials described the hour-long barrage in Rafah as a "diversion," to allow a special forces team to mount a rescue operation of two hostages. At least 74 Palestinians were killed in the process, Gaza health authorities said.

For the 1.4 million people — almost two-thirds of the Gaza Strip's besieged population — now crammed into this city along the Egyptian border, fears

'If they attack Rafah, where can we go? The Egyptian border? The sea?' a Gazan resident asks.

By a special correspondent and Nabih Bulos
REPORTING FROM
RAFAH, GAZA STRIP

are spreading that an Israeli ground assault in Rafah would leave them with no place to escape.

"The sound of the strikes we heard last night ... you couldn't imagine it," said Jamal al Kurd, a 52-year-old homemaker from Rafah. "You're too afraid to move because you don't know what's coming from above, so we just stayed inside."

Israeli authorities previously designated Rafah as an area safe from bombardment, causing the city's population to balloon to more than four times its original number. Six additional families took refuge in al Kurd's apartment building alone.

"If they attack Rafah, where can we go? The Egyptian border? The sea?" she asked. A single mother — her husband had died in Israel's 2009 [See **Rafah**, A4]

Sewage a source of plastic in the air



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

COMPOST piles are prepped for screening at the Tulare Lake plant southeast of Kettleman City. The site processed 20,000 tons of fertilizer from sewage in 2022.

'The more plastics we put out there, the more they are going to end up in soil, in water and in people's food and bodies.'

— AVI KAR, a senior attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council

Microparticles from treated sludge are more easily spread by wind, researchers say.

By Susanne Rust

A team of UCLA researchers has put a new spin on the 1970s rock classic "Dust in the Wind" — only this one is grimmer and grimmer than the original hit by Kansas.

They found that wind picks up microplastics from human-sewage-based fertilizers at higher concentrations than previously known, and may be an "underappreciated" source of airborne plastic bits, flakes and threads.

"If you blow wind on soil with microplastics, you'd expect a similar amount of soil and microplastic to be present in the dust," said Sanjay Mohanty, a UCLA professor of civil and environmental engineering. "But here we found less soil in the dust and a lot more microplastics. That means every time the wind blows, the particles leave the soil preferentially."

That's problematic, he said, because it means people are potentially inhaling these particles, which measure between 1 and 5,000 micrometers, or 5 millimeters, [See **Microplastics**, A9]

GOP impeaches Mayorkas

On 2nd try, House OKs charges against the Homeland Security chief over border issues. **NATION, A5**

Two arrested in four killings

Investigators say fatal shootings in Cudahy, Bell, Huntington Park and L.A. are linked. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

A union push at Disneyland

Costumed characters and parade performers aim to become members of Actors' Equity Assn. **BUSINESS, A8**

Weather

Low clouds clearing. L.A. Basin: 63/46. **B6**

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