

# Tulsa Race Massacre

June 4, 2021

## In news

Hundred years of Tulsa race massacre

## Key updates

Recently, U.S. President Joe Biden became the first sitting American head of state to officially recognise one of the worst incidents of violent racial hate in the country's modern history, the Tulsa Race Massacre of May-June 1921.

## About Tulsa race massacre

- It took place on May 31 and June 1, 1921, when mobs of White residents, many of them deputized and given weapons by city officials, attacked Black residents and destroyed homes and businesses of the Greenwood District in Tulsa, Oklahoma, US.
- Alternatively known as the Tulsa race riot or the Black Wall Street massacre, the event is among the single worst incident[s] of racial violence in American history.
- The attacks, carried out on the ground and from private aircraft, burned and destroyed more than 35 square blocks of the neighborhood – at the time the wealthiest Black community in the United States, known as “Black Wall Street”
- The widespread killings in Tulsa, Oklahoma, targeting relatively well-to-do African Americans, and the extensive damage to their property by rampaging white mobs at the time shocked the nation and world.
- Over the decades since then, it has led to introspection and policy actions that have sought to bridge the racial chasm that continues to haunt American society.
- In 1921, it was the affluent, predominantly African

American neighbourhood of **Greenwood, Tulsa, founded by descendants of slaves and having earned a reputation as the “Black Wall Street” of the U.S.**, that faced the carnage unleashed on May 31 and June 1.

- Tulsa was especially known for being an unofficial sanctuary city for African Americans suffering the consequences of harsh segregation or Jim Crow laws in pre-civil rights America.
- It appears that deep resentment that a community of colour, and one subject to centuries of oppression, had risen to the higher echelons of the economic pyramid blended with historical racist hatred, resulting in lethal violence culminating in the deaths of hundreds, bodily injury to thousands and millions of dollars of damage to the homes and neighbourhoods burned down by the rampaging mob.
- For years, the massacre was barely mentioned in government circles, and in newspapers and textbooks.
- It was only in 2000 that it finally made an appearance in the Oklahoma public schools' curriculum.