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FBI reports increase in violent crimes last year

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The number of U.S. violent crimes increased 2.5 percent last year, the largest percentage gain since the early 1990s, led by more murders, robberies and aggravated assaults, the FBI reported on Monday.

It said the number of murders rose 4.8 percent, the largest percentage gain in 15 years. Robberies increased 4.5 percent while the number of aggravated assaults went up 1.9 percent. The only violent crime category to drop was rape, falling 1.9 percent.

The nation's four regions all posted increases in violent crime in 2005. The Midwest had the steepest jump at 5.7 percent, followed by the West at 1.9 percent, the South at 1.8 percent and the Northeast at 1.4 percent.

While violent crimes went up last year, the number of property crime offenses, such as burglary, larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft, dropped 1.6 percent. The FBI report did not give any explanation why the violent crime numbers went up last year.

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