



Hate Crimes and Incidents in Canada: Facts, Trends and Information for Frontline Police Officers



A repository of facts, trends and information relating to hate crimes and their occurrences in Canada.

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For more information, contact:

Royal Canadian Mounted Police
73 Leikin Drive
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1A 0R2

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Catalogue PS61-56E-PDF
ISSN 2818-3096

This document was developed by the *Reform, Accountability and Culture* sector, under the leadership of Dr. Sara Thompson, a recognized subject matter expert and professor at Toronto Metropolitan University while on contract with the RCMP. The document benefited from the contributions and support of internal subject matter experts and members of the National Hate Crimes Task Force, which is co-chaired by the RCMP and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

The information was compiled in 2023 and will be reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis. Questions, information requests or feedback on the document may be sent via email to: [HateCrimes Repository/Depot d'information sur les CrimesHaineaux](#).

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Hate Crime: Concepts/Definitions

What Is A Hate-Motivated Crime?¹

Hate crime is a broad legal term that encompasses a diversity of motives, perpetrators, victims, behaviours and harms. As discussed in the [Hate Crime Victimization: Targeted Groups](#) section below, research has identified individuals and groups that are at a particular risk of hate crime victimization, including Indigenous peoples and those targeted because of colour, race, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or mental or physical disability, or an intersection of more than one of these identities.²

Hate crimes affect not only individual victims, but also the larger community. Hate crimes also have consequences that reach far beyond a specific incident and are particularly concerning because they:

- Can have uniquely violent and assaultive characteristics;
- Cause trauma to victims, family, and friends;
- Can cause fear of being targeted for future crimes;
- Can escalate and prompt retaliation;
- Can foster community unrest; and
- Threaten national values of tolerance and inclusion.

It is important to note that while hate can be a motivator in these types of offences, it is often not the sole motivating factor. Research demonstrates that hate crimes are often motivated by multiple factors, including ignorance, fear, anger and social/political grievances,³ which can pose legal challenges for determining and demonstrating hateful motivation. In other words, in order to be convicted of a hate crime, it must first be proven in court that the offence was motivated **fully or in part** by hate. [Hate Crimes and Incidents: A Frontline Officer's Initial Response Guidebook](#) provides information and examples to assist in establishing hateful motivation.

Additional Resources

For a short informational video on when hate becomes criminal, please see:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZEEifrN5nl&embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.peelpolice.ca%2F&source_ve_path=OTY3MTQ&feature=emb_imp_woyt

For an important discussion of current challenges associated with clearing hate crimes, see:

- <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-why-arent-more-hate-crime-charges-being-laid-in-canada-a-globe-and/>

What Is A Hate-Motivated Incident?

Hate-motivated incidents involve the same characteristics as hate crimes but do not meet the threshold to be classified as criminal under Canada's *Criminal Code*. In other words, hate-motivated incidents are non-criminal actions or behaviours that are motivated by hate against an identifiable individual or group. Examples of hate-motivated incidents include:

- Sharing discriminatory material in person or posting it on the internet;
- Intimidating a person on social media because of their religion;
- Using racist slurs or epithets;
- Insulting someone based on their national or ethnic origin; and
- Making offensive jokes about a person's skin color or sexual orientation.

Though hate-motivated incidents do not result in the laying of criminal charges, it is important that responding officers take these incidents and the impacts and harms caused to individuals and their communities seriously, including their potential to generate widespread fear in affected communities.

Providing a swift, compassionate and victim-centred response helps to mitigate the impacts of hate, reassure victims and their broader communities, and initiate the recovery process.

For more information about providing a victim-centred response, please see [Victimization, Trauma and the Importance of a Victim-Centred Police Response - Fact Sheet and Glossary of Terms](#).

Hate Crime And The *Criminal Code* of Canada

Overview Of Applicable Sections And General Statutory Aggravating Factors

Legally speaking, hate crimes are criminal incidents that are found to have been motivated wholly or in part by hatred toward an identifiable individual or group. According to subsection 318(4) of the *Criminal Code* of Canada, such groups are distinguishable by colour, race, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or mental or physical disability. Simply put: any criminal act has the potential to be a hate/bias crime if the hate motivation can be proven.

There are a number of provisions available within the *Criminal Code* of Canada to deal with hate crimes:

- **Advocating genocide** (subsection 318(1); for example, a subject openly advocates for the genocide of all people of a specific religion or religious group.
- **Public incitement of hatred where likely to lead to a breach of the peace** (subsection 319(1); wherein a subject wilfully promotes hatred against any identifiable group. For example, a protest leader who addresses a group of people by saying “Your duty is to go and commit violence against [names a specific identifiable group]” is publicly inciting hate.
- **Wilful promotion of hatred** (subsection 319(2); anyone who, by communicating statements other than in private conversation, wilfully promotes hatred against an identifiable group. The statement can be spoken, written or recorded and can include gestures, signs, photographs and drawings.
- **Wilful promotion of antisemitism** (subsection 319(2.1); for example, writing or publishing antisemitic articles that promote Holocaust denial narratives.
- **Conversion Therapy Offences** (sections 320.101-104; subsection 273.3(1)); any form of treatment which attempts to actively change someone’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
- **Mischief motivated by hate in relation to religious property** (subsection 430(4.1); for example, vandalizing a place of worship like a church, synagogue, a temple, gurdwara or mosque.

In addition to these offences, there is a key provision found in subparagraph 718.2(a)(i) of the *Criminal Code* that allows for increased penalties when an offender is sentenced for any criminal offence if there is evidence that the offence was motivated solely or in part by hate.

Relevant *Criminal Code* of Canada sections for each of these offences, along with general statutory aggravating factors, are reproduced below.

Attorney General (AG) Consent

There are procedural gateways to hate crime prosecution; under section 319 of the *Criminal Code* of Canada, consent of the provincial Attorney General is required for two of the hate crime categories: Wilful promotion of hatred (subsection 319(2) and Advocating Genocide (subsection 318(1)).

Laws Pertaining To Hate Crime In Canada

Advocating Genocide

- 318(1)** Everyone who advocates or promotes genocide is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.
- 318(2)** In this subsection, “genocide” means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part any identifiable group, namely,
- a.** killing members of the group; or
 - b.** deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction.

Public Incitement Of Hatred

- 319(1)** Everyone who, by communicating statements in any public place, incites hatred against any identifiable group where such incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace is guilty of
- a.** an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or
 - b.** an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Wilful Promotion Of Hatred

- 319(2)** Everyone who, by communicating statements, other than in private conversation, wilfully promotes hatred against any identifiable group is guilty of
- a.** an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or
 - b.** an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Wilful Promotion of Antisemitism

- 319(2.1)** Everyone who, by communicating statements, other than in private conversation, promotes antisemitism by condoning, denying or downplaying the Holocaust
- a.** is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or
 - b.** is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Conversion Therapy Offences

- 320.102** Everyone who knowingly causes another person to undergo conversion therapy - including by providing conversion therapy to that other person is
- a.** guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than five years; or
 - b.** guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction

Promoting or advertising

- 320.103** Everyone who knowingly promotes or advertises conversion therapy is
- a.** guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than two years; or
 - b.** guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Material benefit

- 320.104** Everyone who receives a financial or other material benefit, knowing that it is obtained or derived directly or indirectly from the provision of conversion therapy, is
- a.** guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than two years; or
 - b.** guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Removal of Child from Canada for Conversion Therapy

- 273.3(1)(c)** removing from Canada a person who is ordinarily resident in Canada and who is under the age of 18 years, with the intention that an act be committed outside Canada that if it were committed in Canada would be an offence.
- a.** guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than two years; or
 - b.** guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Mischief to Religious Property

- 430(4.1)** Everyone who commits mischief in relation to property that is a building, structure or part thereof that is primarily used for religious worship, including a church, mosque, synagogue or temple, or an object associated with religious worship located in or on the grounds of such a building or structure, or a cemetery, if the commission of the mischief is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on religion, race, colour or national or ethnic origin:
- a.** is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years; or
 - b.** is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding eighteen months.

General Statutory Aggravating Factors

- 718.2**
- a.** a sentence should be increased or reduced to account for any relevant aggravating or mitigating circumstances relating to the offence or the offender, and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing,
 - i.** evidence that the offence was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor.

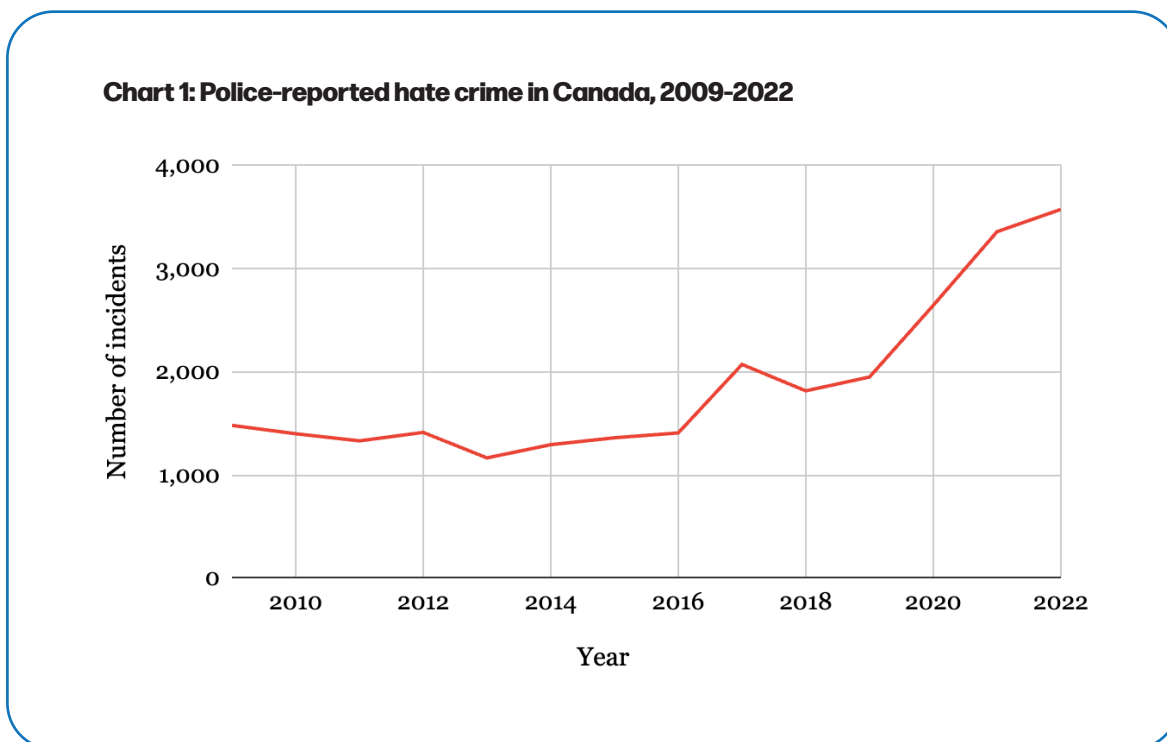
Hate Crime In Canada: Recent Patterns And Trends Over Time And Space

Note: The research and data compiled for this repository are current as of September 2023 and do not take into account recent increases in hate-motivated crimes/incidents that have occurred in Canada and around the world.

Hate Crime Is Rising In Canada

As illustrated in Chart 1 below, between 2009 and 2016, levels of police-reported hate crime in Canada experienced some minor year to year fluctuation, followed by consistent and, at times, sharp year over year increases.⁴

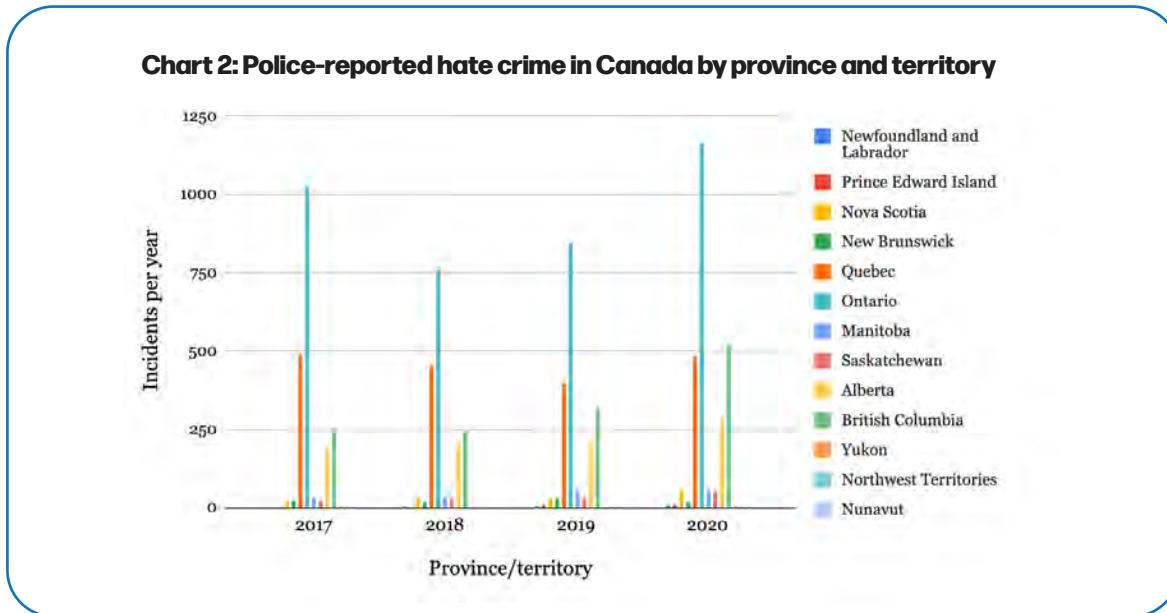
The first pronounced spike in hate crimes began in 2016 and coincided with the rise of populist politics and inflammatory rhetoric directed toward immigrant, racialized, and religious minority groups. Following slight declines between 2017 and 2018, hate crime in Canada again began to increase in 2018-2019, with a second and pronounced spike thereafter that coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, there was a 72% increase in police-reported hate crime between 2019 and 2021 (due in part to a startling 52% increase between May and December 2020), followed by an additional 7% increase in 2022.⁵ In 2022, Canadian police reported 3,576 hate crimes, the largest number recorded since systematic data became available in 2009.⁶



Sourced from: Jing Hui Wang and Greg Moreau, "Police reported hate crime in Canada, 2020," *Juristat*. Accessed at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00005-eng.htm>; Statistics Canada (2023), "Police-reported hate crime, by most serious violation, Canada (select police services)," Accessed at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006701&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2015&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2022&referencePeriods=20150101%2C20220101>.

Do Levels Of Hate Crime Vary Over Time And Space?

Yes. Although overall levels of police-reported hate crime have increased in Canada in recent years, there are distinct variations over time and at the provincial and territorial levels. As seen in Chart 2, visible differences can be identified in the number of police-reported hate crime in each province/territory between 2017 to 2020.⁷



Sourced from: Statistics Canada (2020); "Police-reported hate crime, 2018," *Statistics Canada*, February 26th 2020, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/200226/dq200226a-eng.pdf?st=HceFbY0c>. (Accessed August 30th 2023).

Though there is year-to-year fluctuation in the amount of police-reported hate crime each province/territory experienced, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavut, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories, generally experienced the lowest number of hate crime incidents between 2017 and 2020, while British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec tended to experience comparatively higher numbers.⁸

Where Do Hate Crimes Most Commonly Occur?

In Canada, between 2011 and 2020:

- 33% of police-reported **violent** hate crimes were committed in a park or field.
- 2% of police-reported **violent** hate crimes were committed at a residence.
- 18% of police-reported **violent** hate crimes were committed at a commercial business.⁹

In Canada, between 2011 and 2020:

- 30% of police-reported **non-violent** hate crimes were committed in an open area.
- 24% of police-reported **non-violent** hate crimes were committed at a residence.
- 14% of police-reported **non-violent** hate crimes were committed at an educational institution.
- 13% of police-reported **non-violent** hate crimes were committed at a commercial business.¹⁰

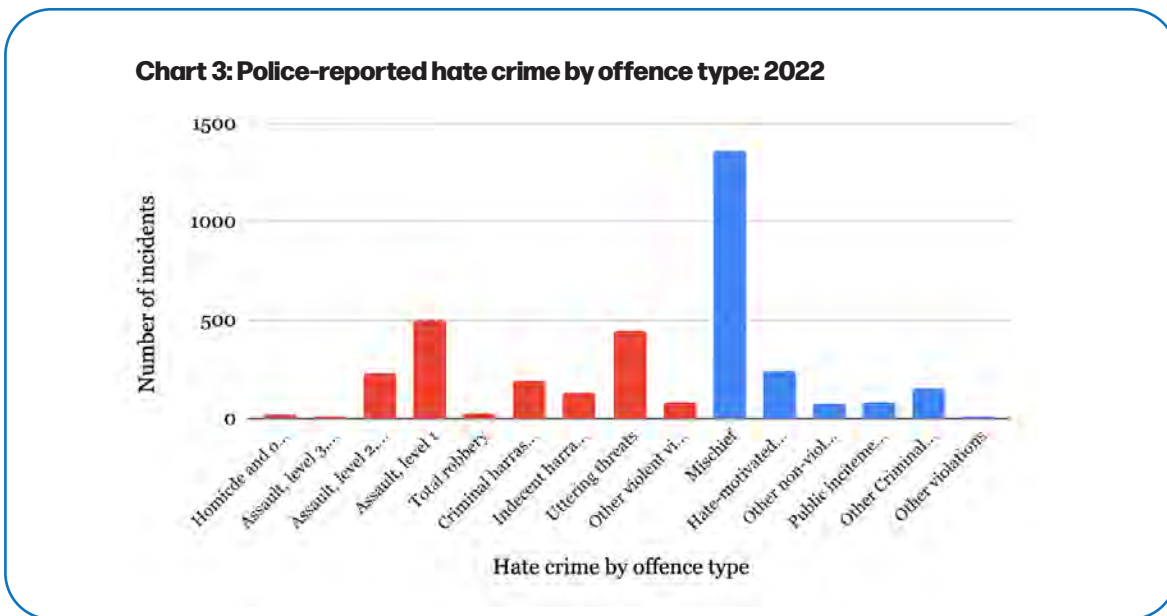
And finally, an increasing number of hate crimes and incidents are taking place online. For example, between 2018 and 2020, police-reported hate crimes classified as “cyberhate” increased from 5.1% of all reported hate crimes in 2018, to 6.9% in 2019, and 7.1% in 2020 (for more information, please see the [Cyberhate Fact Sheet](#)).¹¹ As with hate crime more generally, it is important to recognize that these figures underestimate the true amount of cyberhate, because most incidents are never reported. Indeed, victimization surveys that ask people about their experiences with cyberhate suggest that cyberhate increased by 600% between November 2015 and November 2016, and 5% of respondents in a 2022 survey reported being exposed to cyberhate on a regular basis.¹²

The Nature Of Hate Crime Victimization

In 2022:

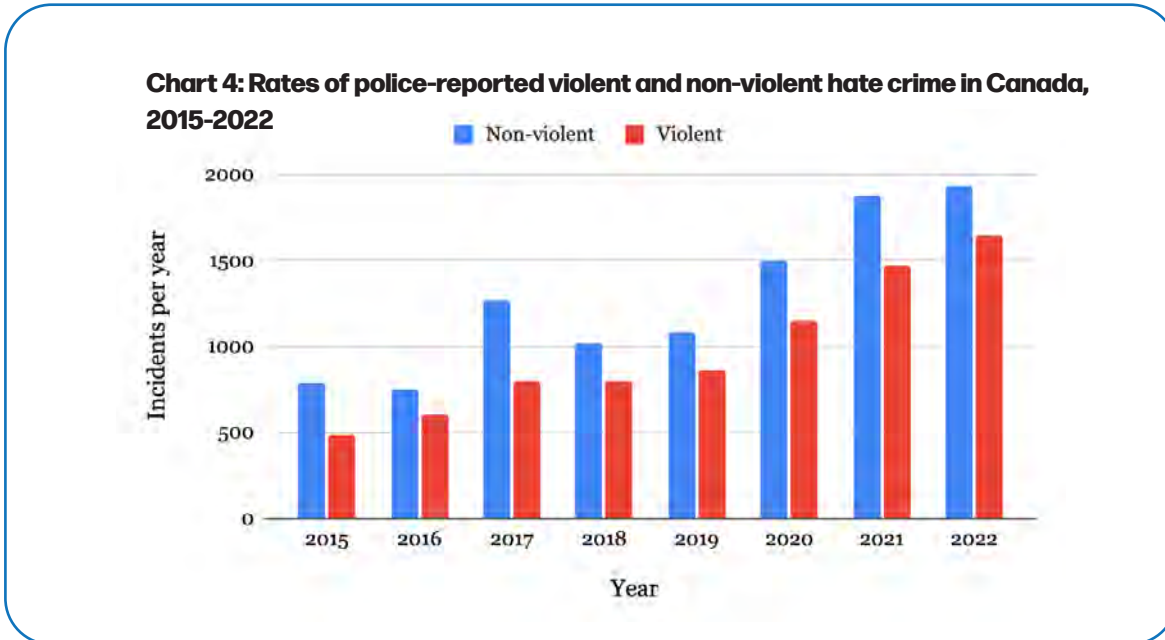
- 53% of all hate crimes were **non-violent**.
 - According to Statistics Canada, mischief was the most frequent type of non-violent hate crime reported to police, representing 38% (1,361) of all incidents.¹³
- 46% of all hate crimes were **violent**.
 - According to Statistics Canada, assault level 1 was the most frequent type of violent hate crime reported to police, representing 14% (504) of all incidents.¹⁴

As seen in Chart 3 below, mischief was the most common form of hate crime reported to police in 2022, followed by assault level 1 and uttering threats.¹⁵



Sourced from: Statistics Canada (2023). “Police-reported hate crime, by most serious violation, Canada (select police services),” Accessed at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tb1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006701&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2015&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2022&referencePeriods=20150101%2C20220101>.

These trends are consistent over the last handful of years. As seen in Chart 4 below, while the number of incidents of violent and non-violent hate crime generally increased between 2015 and 2022 (with some minor year-to-year fluctuation), non-violent hate crime was statistically more prevalent.¹⁶



Sourced from: Statistics Canada (2023). "Police-reported hate crime, by most serious violation, Canada (select police services)." Accessed at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006701&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2015&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2022&referencePeriods=20150101%2C20220101>.

Additional Resources

For an infographic on police-reported hate crime in Canada in 2021, please see:

- <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2023026-eng.htm>

Hate Crime Victimization: Targeted Groups

Certain segments of the population are disproportionately likely to be victims of hate-motivated crimes and incidents relative to others. Provided below is an overview of common hate crime motivation types, segments of the population most likely to be targeted, and recent victimization trends across types.

Hate Crime: Motivation Types

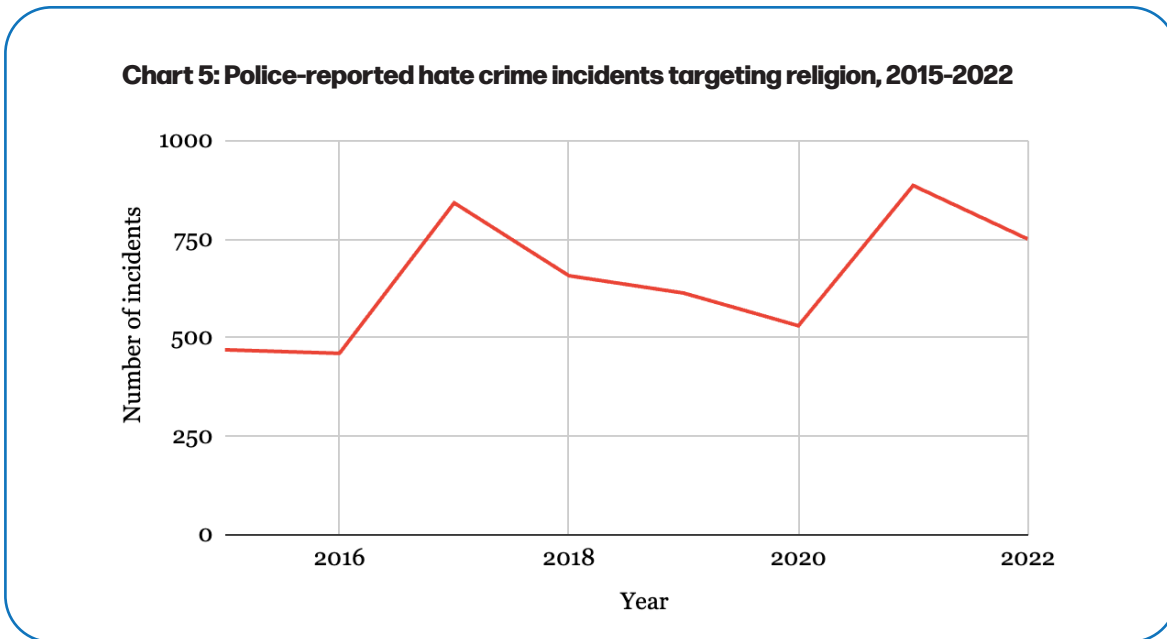
Between 2015 and 2022, the most common hate crime motivation type was based on hatred of:

- race/ethnicity (7,204 incidents, representing 45% of police-reported hate crimes);
- religion (4,455 incidents, representing 28% of police-reported hate crimes);
- sexual orientation (1,653 incidents, representing 10% of police-reported hate crimes);
- sex/gender (289 incidents, representing 1.8% of police-reported hate crimes); and
- other motivations (710 incidents, representing 4.4% of police-reported hate crimes; this category includes mental or physical disability, language, age and other similar factors – for example, occupation or political beliefs).

The following sections disaggregate hate crime motivation types to highlight trends over time and segments of the population that are disproportionately victimized.

Hate Crime Targeting Religion

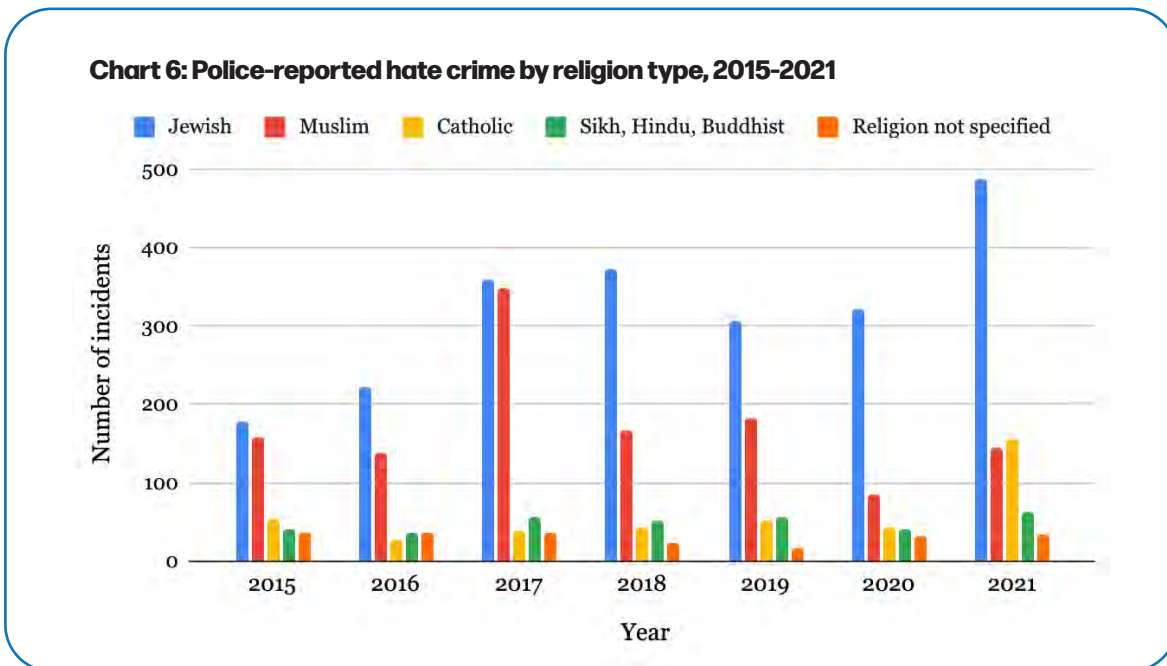
As seen in Chart 5 below, overall levels of police-reported hate crime targeting religion have fluctuated between 2015 and 2022, with a general upward trend punctuated by pronounced spikes in 2017 and 2021, followed by a slight decline in 2022.¹⁷



Sourced from: Statistics Canada (2023), "Police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, Canada (selected provinces)," Accessed at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006601&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2015&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2022&referencePeriods=20150101%2C20220101>.

Chart 6, below, presents data on hate crime victimization by religion type between 2015 and 2021. Over this period, Canada's:

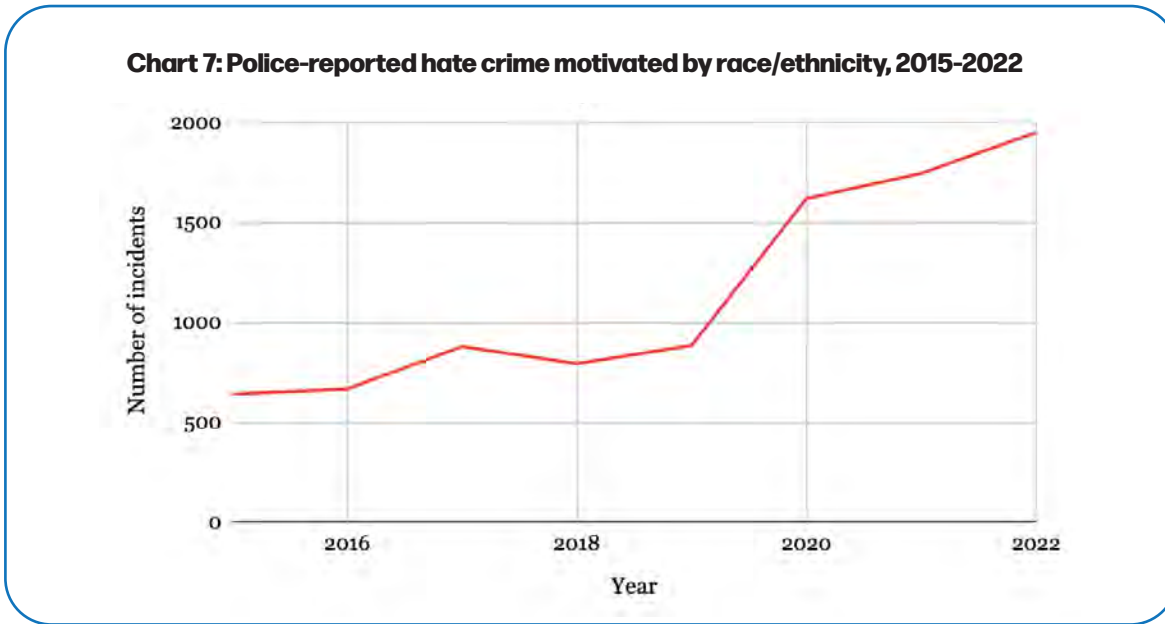
- Jewish population experienced the highest levels of police-reported hate crime victimization (1,856 incidents or 16% of all hate crimes reported to police between 2017 and 2021);
- Muslim population (925 incidents or 7.8% of all hate crimes reported to police between 2017 and 2021);
- Catholic population (332 incidents or 2.8% of all hate crimes reported to police between 2017 and 2021);
- Population that specified “Other” religions (Sikh, Hindu, and Buddhist, representing 270 incidents or 2.3% of all hate crimes reported to police between 2017 and 2021); and
- Population that indicated “Religion Not Specified” (143 incidents or 1.2% of hate crimes reported to police between 2017 and 2021).¹⁸



Sourced from: Statistics Canada (2023). “Police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, Canada (selected provinces).” Accessed at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tb1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006601&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2015&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2022&referencePeriods=20150101%2C20220101>

Hate Crime Targeting Race/Ethnicity

Chart 7 (page 11) presents data on police-reported hate crime motivated by a hatred of race/ethnicity between 2015 and 2022. Over this period, there was a staggering 194% increase, some of which is likely related to rising social polarization created by the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside the rise in populist politics, xenophobia, and racist rhetoric that portrays members of racialized and religious minority communities as threats to community safety and national security.¹⁹ In 2020 alone, hate crime motivated by race/ethnicity accounted for 62% of all hate crimes reported to police in Canada.²⁰



Sourced from: Statistics Canada (2023). "Police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, Canada (selected provinces)."
 Accessed at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006601&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2015&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2022&referencePeriods=20150101%2C20220101>

Between 2017 and 2021, Canada's Black population experienced the highest levels of police-reported hate crime victimization (2,279 incidents representing 19% of all hate crimes reported to police), followed by Canada's:

- East or Southeast Asian population (756 incidents representing 6.4% of all hate crimes reported to police);
- South Asian population (531 incidents representing 4.5% of all hate crimes reported to police);
- Arab or West Asian population (670 incidents representing 5.7% of all hate crimes reported to police);
- Indigenous peoples (254 incidents representing 2.1% of all hate crimes reported to police);
- White population (274 incidents representing 2.3% of all hate crimes reported to police); and
- Population from "Other" racial/ethnic backgrounds (Latin American, South American, and intersectional hate crimes that target more than one race or ethnic group; these accounted for 891 incidents representing 7.5% of all hate crimes reported to police).²¹

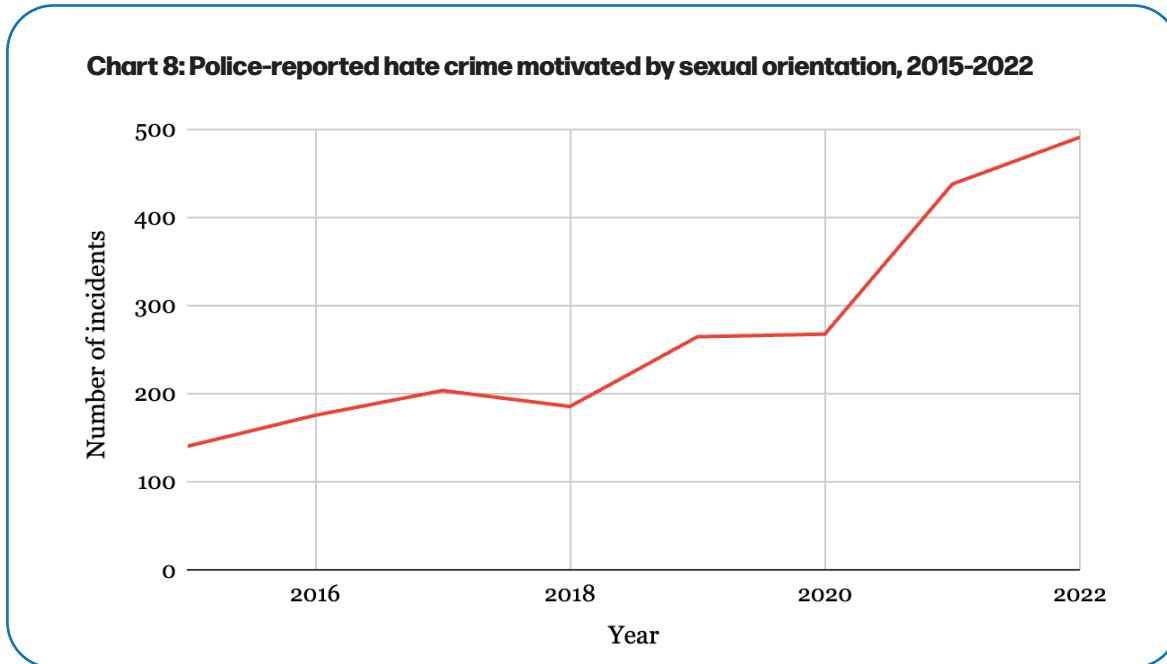
It is important to note that while overall levels of hate crime victimization based on hatred of race/ethnicity increased between 2017 and 2021, some racial/ethnic groups experienced particularly large increases in hate crime victimization between 2019 and the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020.

For example, East and Southeast Asian populations experienced a 293% year-over-year increase between 2019 and 2020. Other racial/ethnic groups also experienced significant increases over the same period, including Canada's:

- Indigenous peoples: +169%;
- Black population: +96%; and
- South Asian population: +67%.²²

Hate Crime Targeting Sexual Orientation

Between 2015 and 2021, police-reported hate crime motivated by hatred of sexual orientation increased by 150%.²³ In 2020 alone, hate crime targeting sexual orientation represented 10% of the total number of police-reported hate crimes in Canada (Statistics Canada); as presented in Chart 8 below, the number of such incidents has continued to increase since then.²⁴



Sourced from: Statistics Canada (2023). "Police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, Canada (selected provinces)," Accessed at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006601&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2015&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2022&referencePeriods=20150101%2C20220101>.

Data on police-reported hate crime motivated by hatred of sexual orientation shows that in 2021:

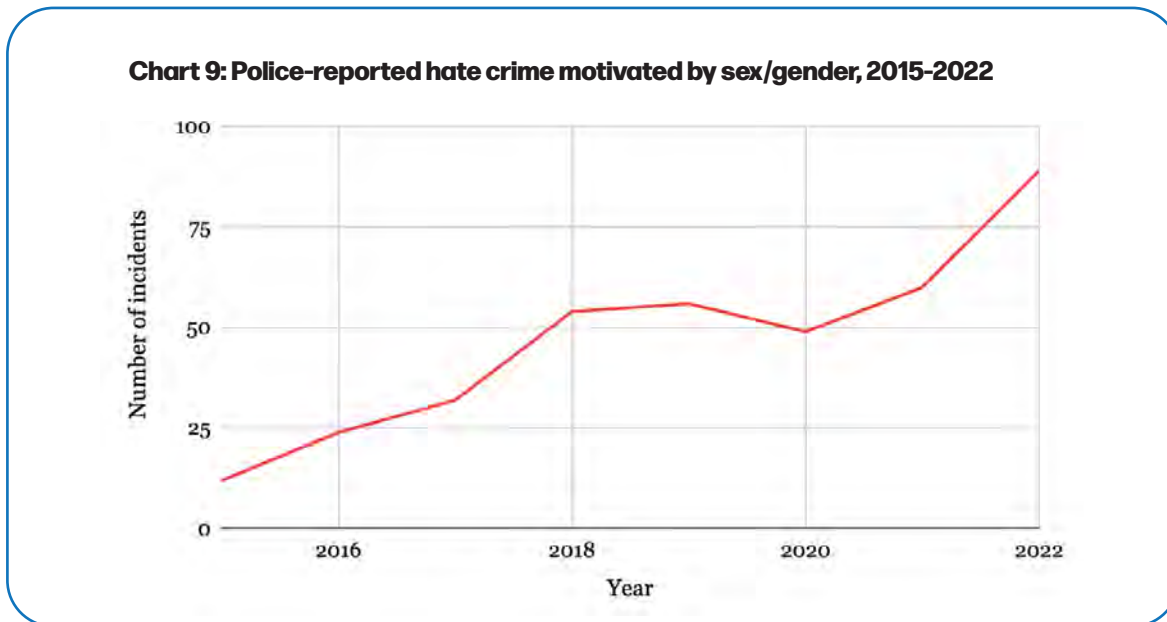
- 77% of police-reported hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation targeted lesbian and gay individuals; and
- 11% of police-reported hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation targeted non-heterosexuals – for example, pansexual and asexual individuals;
- 2% of police-reported hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation targeted bisexual individuals.²⁵

Research also shows that victims of hate crime motivated by sexual orientation:

- Tend to be young and male; ²⁶
- Are three times more likely than other victims of hate to be subject to serious violence; and
- Generally experience greater physical injury (due to the more violent nature of their victimization experiences).

Hate Crime Targeting Sex/Gender

As demonstrated by Chart 9 below, hate crime targeting sex/gender increased steadily between 2015 and 2019, declined slightly in 2020, and then continued to increase – quite significantly – thereafter.²⁷



Sourced from: Statistics Canada (2023). "Police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, Canada (selected provinces)." Accessed at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006601&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2015&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2022&referencePeriods=20150101%2C20220101>.

It is critical to note that like hate crime targeting sexual orientation, hate crimes motivated by hatred of sex/gender tend to involve violence (66% of hate crimes motivated by hatred of sex/gender were violent). They also disproportionately target girls and women.²⁸ However, not all girls and women are equally at risk of hate crime victimization motivated by hatred of sex/gender; racialized and religious minority girls and women – most notably those from Muslim and Indigenous communities – tend to experience the highest levels of this victimization.²⁹

For more information, see [Victims of Hate Crime Infographic Pamphlet](#).

Additional Resources

For a case study example of a violent “gay bashing” hate crime:

- <https://toronto.citynews.ca/2021/06/09/man-says-he-was-beaten-nearly-to-death-in-homophobic-attack-at-toronto-islands/>

For a case study of a violent hate crime motivated by hatred of gender expression and identity, see:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/29/canada-stabbing-attack-university-waterloo-gender-issues-class>

Attacks on LGBTQIA+ Communities Rising in Canada:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8303so2KWWA>

For an overview of targeted groups in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- <https://globalnews.ca/video/9032423/statistics-canada-releases-latest-hate-crime-data>

Hate Crime Offending: Characteristics Of Accused Persons

Typology Of Hate Crime Offenders

Research has identified four types of hate crime offenders: thrill-seeking, reactive, retaliatory, and mission.³⁰ This typology can help police and other practitioners understand the different motivations and characteristics of “typical” hate crime offenders. It is important to note that the four offender types described below are not necessarily mutually exclusive; the lines between categories sometimes overlap or blur, and accused persons may progress from one type to another over time.

Thrill-Seeking

- Youth, often teenagers
- Motives include: thrill, excitement, bragging rights
- Commission of crime is often outside of the offender’s neighbourhood
- Victim is selected by being a part of a vulnerable population
- Approximately 60% of hate crime incidents³¹

Reactive

- Often have no criminal record
- Motives include: perceived threats to their way of life, privileges, rights, community, place of work
- Commission of the crime can occur in the offender’s neighbourhood
- Victim is selected by being perceived as a part of the above threats
- Approximately 25% of hate crime incidents³²

Retaliatory

- Motives include: revenge against innocent members of the group perceived to be responsible for a previous hate crime or act of terrorism/violent extremism; victims are targeted solely because of their identity, and as a form of vicarious retribution.
- Can involve group-offending
- Can prompt stereotypes, stigma and high levels of fear in affected communities
- Approximately 10% of hate crime incidents³³

Mission

- Offender has psychological issues
- Often holds a strong prejudice against a group and/or individual that is targeted and intends to use extreme violence to eliminate the perceived threat
- Motives include: a perceived higher order, desire for retaliation to restore injustice
- No distinguishable triggers
- The smallest number of hate crime incidents³⁴

Characteristics Of Accused Persons

People accused of hate crimes in Canada are disproportionately likely to be young, male, to have had prior contact with police, and to come back into contact with police within three years of their initial hate crime charge. The following section provides information on the sex and age of persons accused of hate in Canada in recent years; comparable data on the racial/ethnic background of accused persons is not publicly available.

Sex

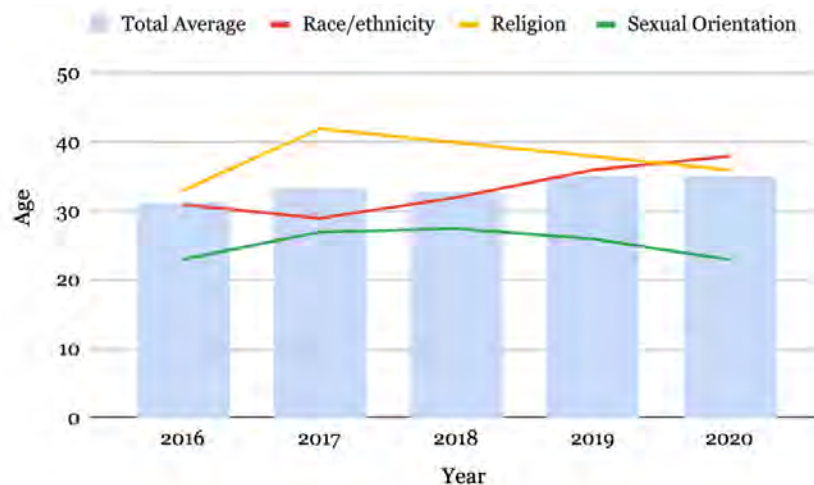
People accused of hate crimes in Canada are disproportionately male.³⁵ Between 2018 and 2021, 86% of hate crime suspects in Canada were male, while 14% of those accused of hate crime in Canada were female.³⁶

Age

From 2018 to 2021, the median age of accused whose crime was motivated by hate was 33 years; 17% of accused persons were youth aged 12 to 17 years.³⁷ The median age of people accused of hate has, however, fluctuated in recent years, rising from 31 in 2016 to 32 in 2018 to 35 in 2020, then declining slightly to 33 in 2021.³⁸ It is important to note that differences also emerge in the median age of persons accused of hate crimes according to the group targeted. For example, as illustrated in Chart 10 below, in 2020:

- The median age of accused persons targeting a victim(s) on the basis of religion was 42 years;
- The median age of accused persons targeting a victim(s) on the basis of race/ethnicity was 36 years; and
- The median age of accused persons targeting a victim(s) on the basis of sexual orientation was 23 years.³⁹

Chart 10: Median age of police-reported persons accused of hate crime, by select motivation, 2016-2020



Sourced from: Statistics Canada (2023). "Police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, Canada (selected provinces)." Accessed at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006601&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2015&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2022&referencePeriods=20150101%2C20220101>.

Data on the average age of accused persons whose crime was motivated by hate are not publicly available for hate crimes targeting race/ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation in 2021.

Other Considerations Of Particular Relevance To Police

- The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has prepared a searchable Hate Symbols database to aid in identifying hate groups and establishing hateful motivation.

<https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbols/search>

Note: this is a US-based resource that may include some groups that are not currently active in Canada and/or may not include groups that are. Officers interested in gaining a more fulsome understanding of active hate groups in their area of jurisdiction should therefore contact the area within their service that houses this information.

- Hate-motivated incidents are 54% more likely than other crimes to involve co-offending.⁴⁰ Moreover, in hate crimes involving more than one accused, serious injury of the victim is 26% more likely.⁴¹ For more information on group offending, including hate crimes perpetrated by members of organized hate groups, please see [Hate Groups in Canada](#).
- Of the 2,872 people accused of at least one hate crime between 2012 and 2018, half (49%) had previously been accused in at least one police-reported incident (not necessarily a hate crime) in the three years preceding their first hate crime charge. More specifically, 32% were accused in one prior incident, 40% were accused in 2-5 prior incidents, and 28% were accused in 6+ prior incidents. Among all prior incidents, just over a quarter (28%) involved violence.⁴²
- Over half (54%) of the 2,872 people accused of a hate crime between 2012 and 2018 came into contact with police again (not necessarily hate-related) within 3 years of their initial hate crime charge. Of these, 27% were accused in one subsequent incident, 40% were accused in two to five subsequent incidents, and 33% were accused in six or more subsequent incidents. Among all subsequent incidents, 30% involved violence.⁴³
- Between 2018 and 2021, just over one in five (22%) of police-reported hate crimes resulted in charges laid; the vast majority of hate crimes over this period (69%) were not cleared because an accused person had not been identified. The remaining 9% were cleared in another way, such as by issuing a warning, caution, referral to a community program, or by the victim requesting that no further action be taken against the accused person.⁴⁴ It is important to note that violent hate crimes (38%) were more likely to result in the laying or recommendation of charges than non-violent hate crimes (9%).

Hate Groups In Canada

What Is A Hate Group?

The term refers to an organization or group of individuals whose goals and activities attack or vilify an entire group of people on the basis of colour, race, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or mental or physical disability. The presence of racist or otherwise prejudiced members within a larger organization or group does not qualify it as a hate group; in order to be classified as such, the organization or group itself must be characterized by and promote a hate-based orientation or purpose. Further, the organization or group need not engage in criminal conduct to be labeled a hate group; as discussed below, some hate groups discourage the use of violence to advance their goals and beliefs.⁴⁵

How Many Active Hate Groups Are There In Canada?

Estimating the number of active hate groups is a difficult endeavour; due to the often-volatile nature of hate group leaders and membership, such groups “start up, fracture and fold all the time” as a consequence of internal conflict.⁴⁶ Further, some hate groups operate in the online space, others involve in-person interaction and still others are structured according to a hybrid online/offline approach. And finally, while some hate groups are highly and hierarchically organized, others are more loosely affiliated and splintered. Taken together, these factors make it difficult to track the number of hate groups currently active in Canada.

Some researchers have, however, tried to estimate the number of hate groups in Canada, though estimates vary. Some research has suggested that, by the mid-2010s, there were more than 100 active organized hate groups in Canada.⁴⁷ By 2021, estimates ranged from 70-100 to approximately 300 such groups, though discrepancies across these more recent estimates are likely and largely a function of differences in the way researchers count hate groups.⁴⁸ Notwithstanding these differences, there appears to be a general consensus that the number of hate groups in Canada has risen in recent years, likely as a consequence of:

- The rise of populist politics and the normalization of racist and incendiary political rhetoric that scapegoats racialized and religious minority groups for a host of community safety and national security issues. Many of the groups stereotyped by this rhetoric have experienced significant spikes in hate crime victimization. In other words, hate crime victimization against certain segments of the population has been shown to increase in the wake of incendiary rhetoric that portrays them as threats to community safety and national security.⁴⁹
- Frustration over the COVID-19 pandemic and related government policies; widespread attributions of blame involving people of Asian background prompted increased incidents of anti-Asian racism, discrimination and violence (for a broader discussion of the pandemic’s impact on hate crime, please see: <https://capitalcurrent.ca/how-canadas-far-right-is-surg-ing-amid-the-pandemic/>).
- ISIS-inspired attacks in North America and Europe have inspired hate crimes against Muslims around the world. Hate crimes perpetrated in response to such attacks illustrate the relationship that sometimes exists between hate crime and violent extremism, wherein hate crimes are intended to serve as a form of vicarious retribution against innocent members of the broader Muslim community (For more information, please see [Is There a Relationship Between Hate Crime and Violent Extremism](#)).
- Successive migrant/refugee crises that expose asylum seekers and migrants to various forms of violence and harassment stemming from problematic narratives asserting that certain migrant and refugee groups are ‘cheating the asylum system’, ‘draining the welfare system’, and/or ‘stealing Canadian jobs’.⁵⁰

These and other events have served as a catalyst for people with particular worldviews to come together and mobilize against these and other perceived threats. The internet has facilitated such connections and provided a medium through which hate groups can instantly disseminate propaganda to a broad audience, recruit new members and organize protests and other group activities.⁵¹ It is this connectivity that makes transnational communication between hate groups possible; research shows that hate groups in one nation can and do learn from and inspire those in other nations, which can complicate enforcement efforts on the part of police and partner agencies.⁵²

In this broader context, hate groups in Canada appear to have grown in both size and number. Maintaining ‘traditional’ white culture and heritage is among the core goals of these groups, which are typically grounded in white supremacist ideology and espouse a host of beliefs including antisemitic and Islamophobic sentiment, though many groups also position themselves against immigrants, women, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and other racialized and religious minority groups.⁵³

Do All Hate Groups Perpetrate Hate-Motivated Crime And Violence?

Though the vilification of groups of people on the basis of identity characteristics (such as gender, nationality, race/ethnicity or religion – or a combination of these characteristics) can inspire or be a precursor to violence, some hate groups do not endorse the use of violence, nor do they perpetrate violence in support of the organization or group’s broader goals.⁵⁴ Research suggests that this may, in part, be a deliberate recruitment tactic; some groups have been purposefully de-emphasizing the promotion of violence and hate because it is off-putting to many and therefore not an effective means of ‘growing the movement’.⁵⁵ Others, however, do privilege and approve of the use of violence. Such varied orientations toward the promotion of violence can make it difficult to assess and/or identify potential threats which can make it difficult to assess and/or identify potential threats and work to reduce the risk of hate-inspired attacks (note that such attacks may involve a spectrum of victim types – from individuals or small group targets through to mass casualty events). Though some hate groups do indeed perpetrate hate crimes, research shows that most hate crimes are committed by individuals with no affiliation to an organized hate group.⁵⁶

Why Do People Join Hate Groups?

Research suggests that people join hate groups for a host of reasons, including but not limited to holding hateful views about certain segments of the population.⁵⁷ More specifically, people join hate groups due to:

- Feelings of alienation and powerlessness;
- Feelings of loneliness; a desire for friendship and a sense of belonging;
- A search for meaning and identity;
- Fear of those that are different and/or fear that one’s social group is ‘under threat’ due to immigration and demographic change;
- Anger and frustration;
- A need to reaffirm a sense of dominance and privilege;
- A tendency toward rigid ‘black and white’ thinking (i.e., lack of critical thinking capacity);
- Traumatic childhood experiences (American research found that 45% of former hate group members reported being the victim of childhood physical abuse, while 20% reported being the victim of childhood sexual abuse); and
- Family disruption in childhood, including divorce, parental incarceration or substance abuse on the part of one or both parents.

In short, hate groups are thought to offer members a sense of identity, meaning and personal significance based on their affiliation with the group. Research shows that hate groups remain “overwhelmingly white and male”; the number of female members is comparatively smaller, with women performing a variety of active roles, including recruitment, gathering intelligence, disseminating propaganda materials, and direct participation in perpetrating violence (albeit at lower levels than their male counterparts).⁵⁸ People who join hate groups come from all socioeconomic backgrounds, professions, and, perhaps surprisingly, they appear to be increasingly racially/ethnically diverse.

In recent years, some hate groups in the United States and Canada have actively recruited members from racialized groups in an attempt to soften their public image and bolster recruitment.⁵⁹ For a discussion of some of the reasons underpinning this apparent trend, see:

<https://www.voanews.com/a/why-some-nonwhite-americans-espouse-right-wing-extremism-/7101229.html>

For more information on why people join hate groups and what ultimately prompts some to leave them, please see:

<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2014/why-they-join>

Currently, information about Canadian hate groups is fragmented and incomplete, which complicates efforts to generate a more fulsome understanding of the threat environment. Until this information has been systematically collated, officers interested in gaining a better understanding of active hate groups in their area of jurisdiction should contact the area within their service that houses this information.

Additional Resources

Canada Has a White Supremacist Problem:

- <https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/foreign-and-security-policy/canada-has-a-white-supremacist-problem-4757/>

Canada's Silent Pandemic: Far Right Hate Groups:

- <https://mjps.ssmu.ca/2020/07/27/canadas-silent-pandemic-far-right-hate-groups/>

Hate Groups Are Recruiting Video Gamers:

- <https://www.npr.org/2018/11/05/660642531/right-wing-hate-groups-are-recruiting-video-gamers>

Hate Speech and Freedom of Speech in Canada⁶⁰

What Is Hate Speech?

There is currently no universal definition of hate speech under international human rights law; the concept remains the subject of debate among scholars and practitioners.

To provide a unified framework to address the problem of hate speech on a global scale, the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech⁶¹ defines hate speech as:

“Any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, gender or other identity factor.”

Though not a legal definition, the UN’s conceptualization of hate speech includes three core elements:

1. Hate speech can be conveyed through any form of expression, including images, cartoons, memes, objects, gestures and symbols and it can be disseminated offline or online.
2. Hate speech is “discriminatory” (biased, bigoted or intolerant) or “pejorative” (prejudiced, contemptuous or demeaning) of an individual or group.
3. Hate speech calls out real or perceived “identity factors” of an individual or a group, including: religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender, but also characteristics such as language, economic or social origin, disability, health status, or sexual orientation, among others.

Examples Of Hate Speech

It is important to note that hate speech can only be directed at individuals or groups of individuals, not against religions, ideas, philosophies, political parties, or states/nations and their associated offices, symbols or public officials.

Here are a few examples of what hate speech typically includes (reproduced from B.C.’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner’s *Hate Speech Q&A*):⁶²

- Describing group members as animals, subhuman or genetically inferior;
- Suggesting group members are behind a conspiracy to gain control by plotting to destroy western civilization;
- Denying, minimizing or celebrating past persecution or tragedies that happened to group members;
- Labeling group members as child abusers, pedophiles or criminals who prey on children;
- Blaming group members for problems like crime and disease; and
- Calling group members liars, cheats, criminals or any other term meant to provoke a strong reaction.

Freedom Of Speech & Limits To That Freedom

“This is a free country, I can say whatever I want.” To some extent – that’s true. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (hereafter “the Charter”) outlines the civil and human rights that Canadian citizens, permanent residents and newcomers to Canada are guaranteed.

One of those rights is freedom of speech, which is laid out in section 2(b) of the *Charter* and enshrines the fundamental freedom of “thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.”

What this means is that those who wish to peacefully protest or convey a point of view have the right to do so, even if their viewpoints are considered offensive by others.

However, these freedoms are not absolute; section 1 of the *Charter* states: “The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.” In other words, there are limits to the kinds of offensive things that people can legally say.

The Supreme Court of Canada has upheld restrictions on forms of expression deemed contrary to the spirit of the *Charter*. More specifically, speech (which can be verbal or written) that incites hatred against any identifiable group where such incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace is a common “restricted speech” category in Canada that may lead to the laying of criminal charges.

Additional Resources

The following case studies illustrate the laying of criminal charges stemming from hate speech, both on- and offline:

- By a Calgary pastor at a children’s library drag event in March of 2023:
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/derek-reimer-calgary-drag-storytime-protest-court-arrest-1.6802594>
- By a secondary school teacher in rural Alberta who taught antisemitic propaganda to his students:
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/keegstra-case>
- By an Ontario man who made a series of statements against the Muslim community online:
<https://toronto.citynews.ca/2017/07/24/mississauga-man-charged-with-hate-crime-over-alleged-online-comments/>

Hate Crimes And Incidents: Victim/Community Reporting And Why It Matters⁶³

Why Some Victims Choose Not To Report

Research shows that a majority (estimates range from 60% to 90%) of people who are victimized by hate do not, for a variety of reasons, report their victimization to police.⁶⁴ There are a number of factors that operate on their own or in combination to shape the decision not to report.⁶⁵ These include (but are not limited to):

- Confusion/lack of knowledge about what a hate crime/incident is;
- Not knowing where or how to report;
- Fear of escalation and/or retaliation;
- Embarrassment, humiliation or shame about being victimized;
- Previous negative experience with police, a lack of trust in police and/or skepticism about the police willingness or capacity to investigate these crimes;
- Normalization of hate victimization; research shows that members of marginalized groups often think that ‘everyday’ verbal abuse, online harassment, and other forms of targeted hostility are not serious enough to be reported to the police. Some even worry that they are wasting police time and resources or think that they have to deal with these issues by themselves;
- For members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, fear of repercussions from ‘being outed’;
- Fear of jeopardizing immigration status;
- A belief that the accused would not be convicted or adequately punished;
- Dealing with the hate crime/incident in another way;
- Concerns about not being taken seriously or not being believed; and
- Cultural and language barriers.

To further complicate matters, police officers’ varying levels of expertise in identifying crimes motivated by hate means that sometimes when victims do report such crimes to the police, they are not recognized or treated as such.

Why Is It Important That Hate Motivated Crimes And Incidents Be Reported?

It is important that hate crimes and incidents be reported to and documented by the police for a number of reasons, including:

- Unreported hate crimes and incidents cannot be investigated or (in the case of hate crimes) prosecuted, which means that accused persons are not held accountable and may be emboldened to re-offend;
- Victims who do not report hate crimes and incidents are generally not able to access the rights and resources entrenched in the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* (for more information, please see [Victim Rights In Canada](#));
- Hate crimes and incidents that are not reported are not officially counted, which obscures the true extent of the problem and the urgent need for action;
- To ensure that operations are calibrated to the scope of the issue. Currently in Canada (as in other nations), hate crime units tend to be under-resourced, in part because reporting rates are generally low. This undermines police services’ capacity to respond effectively to hate-motivated crime and incidents, support victims, offer reassurance to affected

communities, and deploy proactive prevention-/intervention-based programs and initiatives.

How Can Police Services Work To Increase Hate Crime Detection And Reporting?

Recent years have seen increased efforts on the part of police services across Canada to facilitate the identification and reporting of hate motivated crimes and incidents, including⁶⁶:

- Building institutional capacity: As of January 2019, 14 of the 20 largest municipal police services in Canada had dedicated hate crime officers and/or hate crime units;
- Demonstrating that police will respond swiftly and compassionately to all reported hate crimes and incidents;
- Maximizing cultural awareness to better communicate and work with individuals from diverse ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds;
- Increasing use of police training on hate crime and the importance of a victim-centred and trauma-informed police response; robust training can help officers to recognize and respond to hate crimes and incidents effectively. It is, however, important to note that many Canadian police services (particularly smaller services with fewer resources) have not yet developed, nor do they offer such training to their membership;
- Developing innovative methods to encourage the reporting of hate, including a variety of community engagement, partnership and education initiatives, along with protocols that quell fears and reassure victimized communities in the wake of hate-motivated crimes and incidents. For more information on the importance of community engagement and reassurance activities, please see [Hate Crime Prevention: An Important Complement and Supplement to Reactive, Enforcement-based Approaches](#);
- Working to counter discriminatory perceptions and practices in policing to improve relationships and trust with diverse communities and increase perceived police legitimacy;
- Publicly condemning hate crimes and incidents and articulating support for and solidarity with victims and their broader communities;
- Making data on hate crimes and incidents publicly available (publicly available data and reports signal that police acknowledge victims of hate crime and are committed to increasing transparency and raising awareness about the problem of hate, which can help increase public trust and improve reporting rates);
- Engaging and supporting communities most vulnerable to hate crime victimization; and
- Offering a variety of reporting approaches, including third-party and anonymous reporting options.

It is important to note that changes in reporting practices and the provision of additional support to victimized individuals and their communities can have effects on hate crime statistics. That is, higher rates of police-reported hate crime in certain jurisdictions may, in part, reflect differences or changes in the recognition, reporting and investigation of these incidents by police and community members. At the same time, increases in hate-motivated crimes and incidents may also reflect actual increases in the crimes and incidents themselves.

Additional Resources

Why Hate Crimes Against Trans and Non-Binary Canadians Go Underreported:

- <https://xtramagazine.com/power/why-hate-crimes-against-trans-and-non-binary-canadians-go-underreported-162760>

Video on barriers to reporting for Indigenous and other racialized groups:

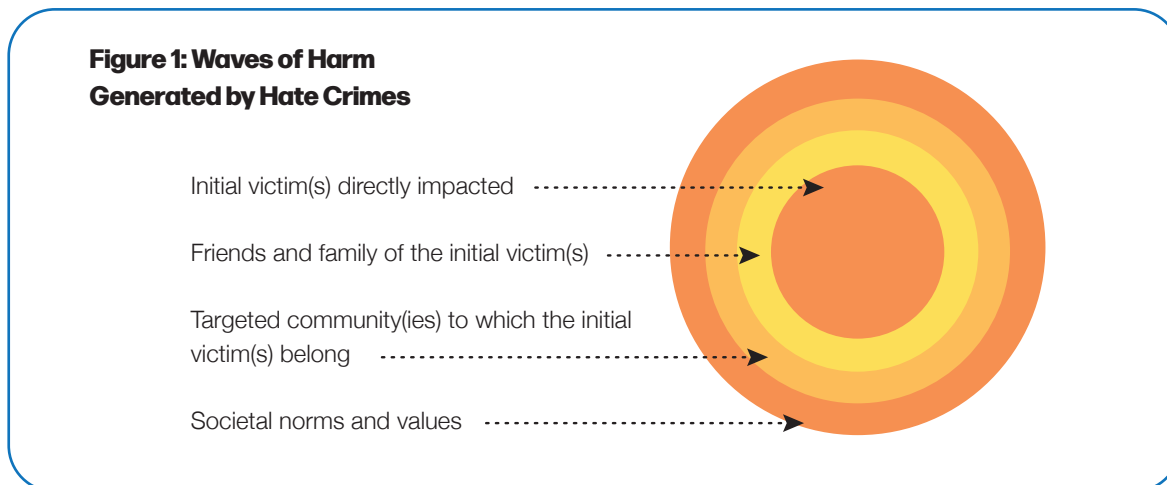
- <https://globalnews.ca/news/8071913/statistics-police-reported-hate-crimes-quebec-community-groups/>

The Impacts Of Hate On Victims, Communities And Society

Background

Research shows that the impacts of hate crime can be profound, lasting, and more severe than for other victimization types. They also extend beyond those directly victimized, like a ripple effect, to affect members of the targeted group more generally.⁶⁷ Recognizing the impact of hate crimes therefore provides a basis for the respectful and sensitive treatment of victims, their families and communities, and can help first responders and victim services agencies better understand and meet their often complex needs. For more information on victim needs and services, please see [Hate Crime Victim Support: A Critical Aspect of the Police Response and Types of Support Victims Need and Want](#).

Figure 1 illustrates how hate crimes and incidents serve as ‘message crimes’ intended to intimidate and control, and the waves of harm that move beyond the victim(s) to also affect their friends and family members, communities (local, national, international and/or online) and, eventually, society.⁶⁸



Sourced from: Schweppe and Perry, “A Continuum of Hate: Delimiting the Field of Hate Studies,” 510; Paul Iganski, “Hate Crimes Hurt More”, *American Behavioral Scientist* 45, No. 4 (2001): 629

The Impacts Of Hate Crimes And Incidents

The impacts stemming from hate crime victimization are broad and can be influenced by a number of factors, including (but not limited to) previous victimization experience, the nature and characteristics of the hate crime or incident, the severity of the crime and injury, race/ethnicity, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, previous experiences with discrimination, and the availability of social support circles (friends, family, faith-based leaders, etc.).⁶⁹ The often intersectional nature of an individual’s identify can also serve to compound and intensify the harm experiences. It is therefore critical that police and partner agencies apply an intersectional lens when responding to hate crimes and incidents to ensure that the multiple biases that motivated the crime or incident are recognized (for example, hatred of race/ethnicity and gender identity) and the nuances of harm that stem from them are recognized and attended to. For more information on the concept of intersectionality, please see [Victimization, Trauma and the Importance of a Victim-Centred Police Response: Fact Sheet and Glossary of Terms](#).

Given the broad and diffuse nature of hate crime victimization, it is helpful to organize the impacts of hate according to whether an individual is **directly** or **indirectly** affected.

Direct impacts are experienced by the initial victim(s) of a hate crime or incident and can involve a variety of physical, psychological, emotional, financial, and social harms that can change over both the short and longer term. **Indirect impacts**, on the other hand, are ‘second-hand’ or ‘proxy’ harms experienced by individuals not directly affected by the hate crime or incident, including family, friends, witnesses, and community members.

Research shows that indirect impacts are often like direct impacts; simply knowing someone who has been victimized is often sufficient to cause these effects.⁷⁰

Direct And Indirect Impacts Of Hate Crime Victimization May Include:

- Physical injury;
- Emotional and psychological distress;
- Trauma (for more information on trauma and related symptoms – including the vicarious trauma that many first responders experience by virtue of their exposure to hate crime victimization – see [Victimization, Trauma, and the Importance of a Victim-Centered Police Response: Fact Sheet and Glossary of Terms](#));
- Anger;
- Depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation;
- Long-term health effects including heart, liver, autoimmune, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease;
- An extreme sense of isolation;
- Reduced sense of safety and security;
- Increased sense of vulnerability and fear of repeat victimization;
- Shame and humiliation;
- Being more security conscious and avoidant, which often involves the use of coping responses to avoid repeat victimization such as moving away, changing routines, avoiding people, places and situations perceived to be potentially dangerous, concealing aspects of their social identity (for example, by not holding hands with their same-sex partner in public, not wearing religious or cultural clothing or symbols, etc.);
- Problems at school or work;
- Relationship problems with family and friends;
- Feelings of rejection and social exclusion that can trigger emotional and psychological pain and distress;
- Substance abuse and self-harm behaviours; and
- Financial harms that stem from their victimization experience in terms of lost wages (due to injury and/or participating in the criminal justice process) and/or loss of/damage to property.

It is important to recognize that first responders may also experience indirect impacts that stem from exposure to victims of hate. Vicarious trauma, sometimes also called “the cost of caring”, “compassion fatigue” and “secondary traumatic stress”, refers to the emotional, and psychological impacts experienced by those working in helping professions – e.g., police, other first responders and frontline social service practitioners – due to their exposure to victims of trauma and violence.⁷¹

In addition to direct and indirect harms suffered by victims, their friends, families, and broader communities and responding frontline professionals, hate crimes and incidents also lead to broader societal impacts and harms. For example, if hate crimes are left unaddressed or are inappropriately/unprofessionally responded to, victims and their broader communities may lose trust in the criminal justice system and process. Hate crimes and incidents can also adversely affect the healthy and positive coexistence between different segments of a community. This can reduce levels of social cohesion and increase the likelihood of retaliation and civil unrest - all of which undermine human rights, the principles of equality and, by extension, important aspects of our democratic process.⁷²

Additional Resources

For more information on the surge of anti-Asian hate in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, see:

- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/2-years-into-the-pandemic-anti-asian-hate-is-still-on-the-rise-in-canada-report-shows-1.6404034>

For more information on the impact of COVID-19 on visible minority groups' experience with harassment based on race, ethnicity and skin colour and the impact on their perceptions of safety, see:

- <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2020045-eng.htm>

Victimization, Trauma And The Importance Of A Victim-Centred Police Response: Fact Sheet And Glossary Of Terms

Background

Hate crime victims often experience more severe impacts than do victims of equivalent offences not motivated by hate⁷³ (for more information, please see [The Impacts of Hate on Victims, Communities and Society](#)). Community members who share the identity characteristics that made the victim(s) a target of hate are also negatively impacted by hate crime, as are those who witness the crime/incident.

Responding officers are often the first representatives of the criminal justice system that victims of crime encounter. As such, they have an important opportunity to secure the scene, stabilize the victim(s), and provide important information, assistance and access to supportive services that can help initiate the recovery process in the immediate aftermath of a crime.

Understanding the post-victimization impacts that hate crimes and incidents can have for victims, their families, and their broader communities is critical to the provision of informed, sensitive, and respectful service delivery, and can assist responding officers to identify and help begin to address victim needs.

This fact sheet provides a glossary of terms related to victimization, along with concepts and approaches to enhance the police response to victims of hate crimes and incidents and provides hyperlinks to additional information for those who wish to learn more.

Glossary Of Terms

Victim Rights in Canada

The *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* entrenches the rights of victims into federal law, including the right to (reproduced from Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime):⁷⁴

- **Information:** Victims have the right to receive information about the justice system, and about the services and programs available to them. Victims may also obtain specific information on the progress of the case, including information on the investigation, prosecution and sentencing of the person who harmed them.
- **Protection:** Victims have the right to have their security and privacy considered at all stages of the criminal justice process, and to have reasonable and necessary protection from intimidation and retaliation. Victims also have the right to ask for a testimonial aid at court appearances.
- **Participation:** Victims have the right to present victim impact statements and have them considered in court. Victims also have the right to express their views about decisions that affect their rights.
- **Seek restitution:** Victims have the right to have the court consider making a restitution order and having an unpaid restitution order enforced through a civil court.

For an easy-to-read infographic that provides more information on victim rights across the criminal justice process, see:

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/vrww-vctm-bll-rghs/vrww-vctm-bll-rghs-en.pdf>

Victim

The *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* defines a victim as “an individual who has suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage, or economic loss as a result of a crime”.⁷⁵ This fact sheet refers to people affected by hate crime as victims in order to be consistent with common legal and practitioner terminology. However, it is important to recognize that the terms “survivor” and/or “victim-survivor” are sometimes preferred because each emphasizes strength, agency and resilience instead of focusing solely on an individual’s status as a victim of a criminal act.

Victim-Centred Approaches emphasize victim safety, rights, well-being, expressed needs and choices, while ensuring the empathetic and sensitive delivery of services and supports in a non-judgemental manner.⁷⁶

Victim-centred approaches for responding to hate crime also emphasize the often-intersectional identities of victims of hate. The concept of **intersectionality** refers to the ways in which multiple identity characteristics (race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc.) intersect and interact to produce unique dynamics and experiences.⁷⁷

A Black woman, for example, is both Black and female, which subjects her to discrimination (and, potentially, hate crime victimization) on the basis of both her race and her gender. It is often not possible to disentangle her identity as a Black person from her identity as a woman, nor is it possible to isolate which of these identity characteristics prompted her victimization – both likely played a contributing role.

Applying an intersectional lens to hate crimes is important because doing so contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the victim experience, which is critical to ensure that services and supports are calibrated to specific and sometimes distinct victim needs.⁷⁸ Officers should therefore ensure that they take all aspects of a victim’s identity into account when assessing, recording and responding to potential hate crimes and incidents.

Culturally-Responsive Approaches refer to the ability of an individual or organization to understand, learn from, and interact effectively with people of different cultures, including drawing on culturally-based values, traditions, spiritual beliefs, customs, languages, and behaviors in the design and implementation of service delivery.

Cultural responsiveness “enables individuals and organizations to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, religions, genders, sexual orientations, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values their worth. Being culturally responsive requires having the ability to understand cultural differences, recognize potential biases, and look beyond differences to work productively with children, families, and communities whose cultural contexts are different from one’s own”.⁷⁹

Trauma

Individual trauma results from exposure to an event or a series of events that are emotionally disturbing and/or life-threatening. Trauma can have significant adverse effects on the individual’s mental, physical, social, emotional and/or spiritual well-being that, without intervention, may persist over time.⁸⁰ The effects of trauma can be mitigated and the healing process initiated via supportive friend and family relationships, community support, personal coping resources and strategies, and access to trauma-informed mental health treatment.

For an overview of physical and emotional symptoms of trauma, see:

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/table/part1_ch3.t1/?report=objectonly

It is important to remember that there is broad variability in trauma-related symptoms across individuals and cultural communities. **Police and victim support partner agencies should speak with victims about their support needs and preferences**, and work to connect victims with appropriate, culturally-responsive and trauma-informed local agencies.

Vicarious Trauma, sometimes also called “the cost of caring”, “compassion fatigue” and “secondary traumatic stress”, refers to the emotional and psychological impacts experienced by those working in helping professions – e.g., police, other first

responders and frontline social service practitioners – due to their exposure to victims of trauma and violence.⁸¹ Fortunately, vicarious trauma can be treated and symptoms alleviated with counselling and early intervention. Identifying and addressing symptoms as early as possible is key to protecting the mental health of officers in this high-stress helping profession and, in turn, enhancing the quality of service delivery to the community.⁸² For information on understanding and addressing vicarious trauma in first responders, see: <https://traumapsychnews.com/2020/08/secondary-traumatic-stress-in-first-responders/>

Trauma-Informed Approaches refers to the provision of services and supports with an understanding of the vulnerabilities and experiences of people who have experienced trauma. Such approaches place priority on restoring the victim's feelings of safety, choice, and control.⁸³

Victims of hate crimes and incidents that report their victimization to the police place their trust in the criminal justice system when they are acutely vulnerable; the attitudes displayed by system players can sometimes serve to re-traumatize victims, which can exacerbate the harm experienced.

Examples of the ways in which representatives of the criminal justice system – including police – can contribute to this re-traumatization include:⁸⁴

- A failure to recognize potential hate crimes and incidents due to a lack of awareness and training;
- A lack of a response, or a response perceived by victims to be unhelpful or unprofessional;
- Attributing responsibility for the crime to victims (victim-blaming);
- Minimizing the seriousness of a hate crime and/or trivializing the victim experience and harm(s) experienced;
- Denying the victim's perspective in the assessment and evaluation of the crime and/or not taking a bias motivation into consideration or dismissing it as irrelevant;
- Displaying negative or prejudicial attitudes toward the victim(s);
- Expressing sympathy and understanding for the perpetrator;
- Lacking appropriate knowledge, experience and skills to recognize the significance of the victim's identity (or intersecting aspects of their identity) for the victimization they experienced and the services and supports they require to recover; and
- A lack of consideration for victim needs and preferences, especially the need for information and access to appropriate victim services and supports.

It is important that all professionals working with agencies that support victims of hate crime (including police and other criminal justice actors) recognize that their actions and attitudes can have critical impacts on hate crime victims.

Traditionally, the criminal justice system has focused on identifying, apprehending, prosecuting and holding offenders accountable for their behaviour; the needs of victims are often left unmet. By recognizing that victim-centric, trauma-informed and culturally-responsive approaches are core elements of an effective victim response, responding officers can prioritize victims' early access to information and supportive services, thereby initiating the recovery process.

Responding officers can take steps to mitigate the possibility of inadvertently re-traumatizing victims while working to ensure they provide victim-centred, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive service by adopting guidelines that are described in [Hate Crimes and Incidents: A Frontline Officer's Initial Response Guidebook](#).

For more information, see [The Sensitive and Respectful Treatment of Hate Crime Victims](#).

Hate Crime Victim Support: A Critical Aspect Of The Police Response And Types Of Support Victims Need And Want

Introduction

Victim support is an essential and often overlooked component of a comprehensive police response to hate crimes and incidents.

Traditionally, the criminal justice system has focused on identifying, apprehending, prosecuting and holding offenders accountable for their behaviour; the needs of victims are often unmet. The failure to understand victim needs and provide timely access to appropriate and adequate care can exacerbate the harm experienced. By contrast, the provision of meaningful assistance and support can have a profound impact on the recovery process, empower victims, increase trust and confidence in police, and facilitate cooperation with police and the criminal justice system to hold perpetrators accountable. So, too, does the provision of respectful and dignified treatment of victims, which should be the cornerstone of the police response.

Responding officers should adopt a victim-centred approach that focuses on ensuring the rights, safety, well-being and expressed needs and choices of victims when responding to hate crimes and incidents. Responding officers should also recognize that victims' needs are diverse, complex and may change over time – which necessitates a continuum of care over the short- and longer-term involving a range of partner agencies with expertise, resources and services that many police services cannot provide on their own.

Seven Critical Needs Of Victims And Recommendations For Responding Officers⁸⁵

Crime victims require a continuum of support and services to heal. Working to meet the seven critical needs of victims outlined below can provide a foundation for victim-centered, trauma-informed practices. While victim needs vary, these seven categories highlight areas of focus for police, who play a principal role in ensuring victims' needs are understood and addressed with compassion and respect for their dignity.

Victim Need #1: Personal Safety And Security

In the aftermath of a hate crime or incident, victims may feel profoundly unsafe and need to be reassured by responding officers that appropriate actions will be taken to support and protect them. Wherever possible, responding officers should:

- Provide information about risk reduction and the likelihood of re-victimization; and
- Recommend actions to take when experiencing intimidation and fears about future harm.

Physical, emotional, and psychological safety are all important for victims in the aftermath of crime. Wherever possible, officers should:

- Recognize that victims' safety concerns may also extend to children, family members, friends and community members; and
- Create an environment where victims feel safe reporting crimes and expressing their thoughts, fears, and needs.

Victim Need #2: Individualized Support

In the aftermath of a hate crime or incident, some victims will require support to deal with the immediate consequences and impacts. This can include a host of support services provided by a diverse array of local agencies. Though the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* entrenches a victim's right to receive information about the services and programs available to them, opportunities for connecting victims with the help they need are often missed by police. Wherever possible, officers should:

- Allow support persons chosen by victims to be present when possible. When this is not possible, explain why;
- Speak with victims to learn about their support needs and preferences; and
- Facilitate connections to local agencies and services that are in keeping with the victim's expressed needs and choices for ongoing support and assistance.

Victim Need #3: Information

Hate crime victims will need information about their rights, what to expect in terms of the investigatory process, and future points of contact as the investigation progresses. Wherever possible, officers should:

- Provide victims' rights information and guidance around exercising those rights. Provide information in multiple ways (e.g., in conversation, through written material/brochures, on agencies' websites); and
- Provide updates on the investigation. Notify victims when a case does not result in an arrest and prosecution. Explain why and how decisions are made, making reference to specific legal reasons where applicable (for example, because the incident did not meet the threshold for the laying of criminal charges).

Victim Need #4: Access To And Assistance With The Criminal Justice Process

Victims need opportunities to participate in criminal justice system processes. Wherever possible, officers should:

- Ensure information on various stages of the criminal justice process and what to expect is provided to victims in languages used by community members (e.g., spoken languages, sign language, braille); and
- Keep victims informed about the progress of their case as it moves through the criminal justice system.

Victim Need #5: Continuity

Victims encounter multiple professionals and processes in the criminal justice system. Wherever possible, officers should:

- Collaborate with other criminal justice professionals, community agencies, and victim services providers;
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of other professionals;
- Use consistent language and victim-centered, trauma-informed and culturally-responsive approaches across agencies (for an overview of what these terms mean, please see [Victimization, Trauma and the Importance of a Victim-Centred Police Response: Fact Sheet and Glossary of Terms](#)); and
- Facilitate supportive handoffs to other police, criminal justice and victim services professionals as cases progress.

Victim Need #6: Voice

Crime victimization involves direct or threatened physical, emotional and other forms of harm as a result of actions taken by others. The response to crime also involves decisions and actions by others. It is important for victims to have a voice in the criminal justice system; victims want and need to be heard, understood, believed and taken seriously. Wherever possible, officers should:

- Encourage victims to ask questions and listen to their concerns; and
- Invite victims and victim services personnel (agency-employed and community-based) to participate in case-related discussions.

Victim Need #7: Justice

Many cases do not result in the arrest, prosecution, and sentencing of offenders. Procedural justice, which refers to the concept of fairness in the processes that resolve disputes and allocate resources, may be the only form of justice that some victims receive (for more information, see: <https://law.yale.edu/justice-collaboratory/procedural-justice>). Wherever possible, officers should:

- Recognize that not all victims define justice the same way;
- Explain criminal justice system processes and how decisions are made;
- Complete thorough trauma-informed and offender-focused investigations;
- Do their part to hold offenders accountable; and
- Ask victims for their input and views.

Types Of Victim Services

Victims require a range of support types,⁸⁶ including:

System-Based Victim Services

These are independent from police, courts and Crown attorneys. System-based services assist victims throughout their contact with the criminal justice system. Services may include (but are not limited to):

- Provision of information, support, referrals
- Short term counselling
- Court preparation and accompaniment
- Victim impact statement preparation
- Liaising with police, courts, Crown and corrections.

Police-Based Victim Services

These are usually offered following a victim's first contact with police. While victim service agencies may be located in police divisions or detachments, they are not always staffed by police employees; many police-based victim services have a coordinator, civilian staff and trained volunteers. Services offered may include (but are not limited to):

- Provision of information and referrals
- Assistance and Support
- Court orientation

Court-Based Victim Services

These provide support for victims or witnesses. Court-based victim services provide information, assistance and referrals to victims and witnesses with the goal of trying to make the court process less intimidating. Services may include (but are not limited to):

- Court orientation, preparation and accompaniment
- Updates on case progress
- Coordination of meetings with Crown counsel
- Assessment of the availability of a child victim/witness to testify.

Community-Based Victim Services

These provide direct services to victims, which may include (but are not limited to):

- Emotional support
- Practical assistance
- Information
- Court orientation
- Referrals

Volunteers And Non-Governmental Organizations

Many police-based and community-based victim services utilize trained volunteers to assist with their program delivery. These organizations can operate at local, provincial and national levels, and offer a diverse range of services and supports.

Victim support is an essential and often overlooked component of a comprehensive police response to hate crimes and incidents. Understanding and working to meet the critical needs of hate crime victims can help to uphold the rights enshrined in the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*, assist victims as they move through the criminal justice process and initiate victim recovery.

Additional Resources

The Victim Services Directory created by the Policy Centre for Victim Issues of the Department of Justice Canada:

- <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/victims-victimes/vsd-rsv/index.html>

The Crime Victims Assistance Program created by the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime:

- <https://crcvc.ca/how-we-help/>

Cyberhate: Fact Sheet

What Is Cyberhate?

The term cyberhate refers to **hate speech** that occurs online and involves the use of electronic communications technologies including the internet (i.e. websites, social networking sites, user-generated content, dating sites, blogs, online games, instant messages and email) as well as other computer- and cell phone-generated technologies (such as text messages). Cyberhate occurs when people are targeted by online hate speech on the basis of their actual or perceived colour, race, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or mental or physical disability.

This fact sheet uses the term “cyberhate” to refer to online hate speech, though the terms are often used interchangeably.

What Is Hate Speech?

The concept of hate speech refers to any kind of communication that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or group based on their identity characteristics.⁸⁷ Hate speech can be communicated verbally or in writing, or via the use of images, cartoons, memes, objects, gestures and symbols – and it can take place both on and offline.

Examples Of Cyberhate

It is important to note that hate speech can only be directed at individuals or groups of individuals, but not against a religion, ideas, philosophies, political parties, or states/nations and their associated offices, symbols and public officials.

Cyberhate comes in many forms and can be rooted in racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, antisemitism, Islamophobia and white supremacy, either alone or in combination.

Here are a few examples of what hate speech typically includes:⁸⁸

- Describing group members as animals, subhuman or genetically inferior;
- Suggesting group members are behind a conspiracy to gain control by plotting to destroy Western civilization;
- Denying, minimizing or celebrating past persecution or tragedies that happened to group members;
- Labelling group members as child abusers, pedophiles or criminals who prey on children;
- Blaming group members for problems like crime and disease; and
- Calling group members liars, cheats, criminals or any other term meant to provoke a strong reaction.

For an overview of findings from an in-depth analysis of almost 3,000 internet memes shared by over 100 Canadian social media accounts that demonstrate hate speech as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code, please see:

<https://cdn.sanity.io/files/rdq6owff/production/6b78f8630669069025ea145da2221ef2c1fac032.pdf>

Cyberhate And The *Criminal Code*

Hate Speech/cyberhate is addressed by the *Criminal Code* of Canada in the following ways:

- Public incitement of hatred - subsection 319(1)
- Wilful promotion of hatred - subsection 319(2)
- Wilful promotion of antisemitism - subsection 319(2.1)

Hate speech is also prohibited by provincial/territorial human rights codes (often through the prohibition of “discriminatory speech”); individual complainants are required to file complaints with the human rights tribunal in their home province/territory. For more information on this process, see the section entitled “Anti-Hate Provisions in Human Rights Legislation” at: https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/201825E#a4).

Cyberhate: Trends Over Time

The proportion of police-reported hate crimes that were also classified as cyberhate has been steadily increasing in recent years, from 5.1% of reported hate crimes in 2018, to 6.9% in 2019 and 7.1% in 2020.⁸⁹ As with hate crime more generally, it is important to recognize that these figures underestimate the true amount of cyberhate, because most incidents are never reported. Further, some Canadian police services were unable to provide data on cyberhate between 2016 and 2020, which exacerbates the undercount issue.

Between 2016 and 2020, the most common types of cyberhate crime reported to police were:

- **Uttering threats of harm or violence** against members of an identifiable group was the most common type of reported cyberhate crime (39% of reported crimes);
- **Indecent or harassing communications** intended to create a climate of fear (24%);
- **Public incitement of hatred** (encouraging and/or mobilizing a group of people in an online forum to commit violence) (12%); and
- **Criminal harassment** (ongoing harassment over a period of time that is intended to create a climate of fear) (11%).

Cyberhate Victimization

Between 2016 and 2020, the groups most likely to be targeted online mirror those targeted in person;⁹⁰ a disproportionate amount of online hate is directed toward members of the following communities:

- Muslim (16% of reported victims);
- Black (15% of reported victims);
- Jewish (13% of reported victims);
- 2SLGBTQIA+ (13% of reported victims);
- Young people: cyberhate victimization is particularly high among adolescents and young adults in their early 20s, due in large part to the amount of time they are engaged in online school, work and leisure activities (gaming, chat rooms, etc.);⁹¹
- Girls and women are at the higher risk of cyberhate victimization, particularly if they are racialized, from a religious minority group and/or from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Young women aged 18-24 are at the greatest risk of experiencing the most severe forms of cyberhate, particularly severe types of harassment and sexualized abuse;⁹² and

- After 2020, there were also significant increases in hate crime victimization – both on and offline – against the Asian population, due to narratives that hold them responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions. For example, there was a 301% increase in police-reported hate crime against the East and South-East Asian populations in the first year of the pandemic,⁹³ and a 73% increase in cyberhate involving Asian victims over the same period.⁹⁴

Relying on official data on police-reported cyberhate victimization can be problematic because most cyberhate is not brought to the attention of the police and is therefore not counted in official statistics. Findings from research that uses other means of documenting cyberhate victimization can therefore be helpful for filling in the gap between reported and unreported cyberhate.

Recent Canadian research suggests that the gap is significant. For example:

- Online hate speech increased by 600 percent between November 2015 and November 2016.⁹⁵ This unprecedented increase coincided with a rise in populist politics and incendiary political rhetoric that normalized online and other forms of hate speech by portraying racialized, immigrant and religious minority groups as threats to community safety and national security; and
- A study conducted by Toronto Metropolitan University's Leadership Lab asked 2,000 Canadians (aged 16+) questions about their personal experiences with cyberhate. Forty per cent of survey respondents reported being exposed to cyberhate on a monthly or weekly basis, an additional 5% reported daily exposure, and 8% of people surveyed said they were targets of online hate that caused them to fear for their safety.⁹⁶

Cyberhate: Overview Of Select Considerations Of Particular Relevance To Police

- The impacts of cyberhate – as with hate crime more generally – are felt by individual victims and their broader communities (for more information, please see [The Impacts of Hate on Victims, Communities and Society](#)), but also by society more generally. Understanding the broad impacts of hate can assist police and partner victim services agencies to meet their diverse and often complex needs.
- Cyberhate can be a form of online communication initiated by organized hate/extremist groups for the purpose of recruiting sympathizers, and for communicating, mobilizing and coordinating collective action (for example, by encouraging rejection, hatred and violence against certain individuals and groups).⁹⁷ It is, however, important to recognize that individual offenders who are not affiliated with organized hate groups appear to be most likely to perpetrate cyberhate (For more information, please see [Hate Groups in Canada](#)).⁹⁸
- Cyberhate often increases, sometimes dramatically, in the wake of offline 'trigger' events of local, national and/or global significance – such as protests and riots, in addition to high-profile violent crimes, terrorist attacks (and anniversaries of such attacks), and court cases.⁹⁹ In this way, cyberhate is said to reflect a desire for retribution against innocent members of the larger group thought to be responsible for, or associated with, the trigger event.¹⁰⁰ It appears that the period of acutely elevated risk for cyberhate perpetration in the wake of a trigger event is 24-48 hours, meaning that there is a "sharp and measurable rise" in cyberhate crimes and incidents 24-48 hours after the trigger event takes place (48-72 hours is the period of acutely elevated risk for spikes in offline hate crime following a trigger event).¹⁰¹

Responding To Cyberhate

Hate crimes perpetrated over the internet present particular challenges for police. These include:¹⁰²

- the volume of online communications;
- the lack of capacity to monitor and respond to cyberhate (in terms of resources, technology skills barriers, etc.);
- the inter-jurisdictional nature of cyberspace, which can create criminal jurisdictional issues and complicate efforts to identify victims and perpetrators; and
- the ease, speed and anonymity by which content can be disseminated.

These and other challenges have meant that the current official responses to cyberhate are generally reactive in nature and rely on users reporting offensive and hateful content to media platforms and/or the police service of jurisdiction for review and possible remedy (i.e. removing the offensive content, laying of criminal charges, etc.).

Police officers receiving reports of cyberhate should recognize the applicability of existing *Criminal Code* sections to hate-motivated criminal acts perpetrated over the internet and follow the initial response recommendations documented in [Hate Crimes and Incidents: A Frontline Officer's Initial Response Guidebook](#).

For more information, see [Hatepedia Guide to Online Hate by the ADL](#).

Additional Resources

“Online hate crimes are on the rise but a cybersecurity expert says they’re rarely reported”:

- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/zoom-bombing-hate-crime-1.6285556>

“Anti-2SLGBTQIA+ Hate in Canada Must End” (with a section on online hate):

- <https://www.amnesty.ca/human-rights-news/anti-2slgbtqia-hate-in-canada-must-end/>

“We Won’t Recover From the COVID-19 Pandemic Unless the Outbreak of Violent Online Hate is Stamped Out”:

- <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-we-wont-recover-from-the-covid-19-pandemic-unless-the-outbreak-of/>

Online hate crimes via “zoom-bombing” in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- <https://theconversation.com/zoom-bombings-disrupt-online-events-with-racist-and-misogynist-attacks-138389>

Is There A Relationship Between Hate Crime And Violent Extremism?

Background information

The concept of violent extremism refers to the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve extreme ideological, religious or political goals.¹⁰³ In other words, violent extremism is a broad and inclusive term that describes a spectrum of ideologies and belief systems; extremist violence is not specific to a particular group, background, religion or culture. Indeed, research consistently demonstrates that those who perpetrate such violence come from diverse socioeconomic, religious and racial/ethnic backgrounds.¹⁰⁴

The Canadian government and security agencies have adopted a typology, or classification system derived from definitions of violent extremism in the *Canadian Criminal Code* (section 83.01) and the *CSIS Act* (section 2c) that includes three primary categories of violent extremism: ideologically motivated, politically motivated and religiously motivated.¹⁰⁵ It is important to note that these are not mutually exclusive categories given that extremist ideologies and belief systems often stem from and are tailored to personal grievances held by a given individual. Each category is discussed below.

- **Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism (IMVE):** Driven by a combination of ideas and grievances, rather than a singular belief system, and includes gender-driven (including INCEL and anti-2SLGBTQIA+ violence), xenophobic (including anti-immigrant, racist and ethno-nationalist violence), anti-authority (including anti-government violence, violence against law enforcement and anarchist violence), and other grievance-driven violence (including violence committed by individuals with no association to an organized group or external organization).
- **Politically Motivated Violent Extremism (PMVE):** Encourages the use of violence to establish new political systems or instill new structures or norms within existing systems.
- **Religiously Motivated Violent Extremism (RMVE):** Encourages the use of violence as part of a spiritual confliction, or struggle, against a system perceived to be immoral.

What Does The Current Extremist Threat Landscape Look Like In Canada?

Though politically and religiously motivated violent extremism constitute threats to Canada's national security and the safety and security of Canadians more generally, IMVE appears to pose a particularly salient threat. A recent CSIS publication cited by the Government of Canada¹⁰⁶ reported that between 2014 and 2020:

"Canadians motivated in whole or in part by their extremist ideological views have killed 21 people and wounded 40 others on Canadian soil – more than religiously motivated violent extremism (RMVE) or politically motivated violent extremism (PMVE). In early 2020, for example, a Canadian minor motivated by the involuntary celibate (Incel) ideology was charged under the terrorism provisions of the *Criminal Code*. These individuals and cells often act without a clear affiliation to a specific organized group or external guidance but are nevertheless shaped by hateful voices and messages online that normalize and advocate violence.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated xenophobic and anti-authority narratives, many of which may directly or indirectly impact national security considerations. Violent extremists continue to exploit the pandemic by amplifying false information about government measures and the virus itself on the internet. Some violent extremists view COVID-19 as a real but welcome crisis that could hasten the collapse of Western society. Other violent extremist entities have adopted conspiracy theories about the pandemic in an attempt to rationalize and justify violence. These narratives have contributed to efforts to undermine trust in the integrity of government and confidence in scientific expertise. While aspects of conspiracy theory rhetoric are a legitimate exercise in free expression, online rhetoric that is increasingly violent and calls for the arrest and execution of specific individuals is of increasing concern.

In 2020, CSIS has assessed that threat narratives within the IMVE space have evolved with unprecedented multiplicity and fluidity. Broadly speaking, IMVE conspiracy theories are often influenced by decentralized online trends and communities of extremist influencers who interpret local, national and international events through a radical lens. These broader narratives are often individualized by extremists and are impacted by perceived concerns regarding economic well-being, safety and security, the COVID-19 pandemic or other special events."

Is There A Relationship Between Hate Crime And Violent Extremism?

There can be, but often is not. Research demonstrates that hate crime and violent extremism share some important similarities,¹⁰⁷ and should therefore be viewed as “close cousins”. This is because in each case, the target of the offence is selected because of his or her group identity, not because of his or her individual behavior, and because hate crime and violent extremism are specifically intended to generate fear among a greater number of people than those directly affected.

There can be a temporal relationship (an ordering of events across time) between hate and extremist violence – that is, one can trigger the other. More specifically, some research has demonstrated that violent extremism can **sometimes** serve as a precursor to hate crime, while other research has found the reverse – that is, hate crime can **sometimes** serve as a precursor to extremist violence.

Research has found that **some** hate crimes are perpetrated in response to acts of extremist violence, serving as a form of vicarious retribution against innocent members of the group thought to be responsible for the extremist act.¹⁰⁸ Marked increases in hate crime victimization targeting Muslim people in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks exemplify this relationship. The risk of vicarious hate crime victimization increases – often significantly – within the first four weeks of an extremist attack, though the first week generally appears to be the period of acutely elevated risk for hate crime victimization.

It also appears that hate crime can serve as an indicator of future extremist violence. The evidence base on this issue is, as yet, limited, but some recent research suggests that expressions of hatred (manifested as hate crimes and incidents) may be indicative of an escalation from low-level and/or non-criminal incidents to more violent (and therefore criminal) forms of violent extremism. This escalation is premised on, and tied to, the concept of radicalization to violence – a process through which an individual or group comes to believe that violence is a legitimate and even preferred means through which to advance a particular belief system or ideological cause. For example, research shows that Incels (involuntary celibates) engage in cyberhate (aka ‘shitposting’ misogynistic and white supremacist hate speech in digital forums), but as their views become more extreme, so too can their actions, as a number of high-profile mass casualty attacks in Canada and the United States well demonstrate.¹⁰⁹

Findings from research on the relationship that **sometimes** exists between hate crime and extremist violence has obvious implications for police services, who can provide important reassurance, prevention and community support roles in the wake of such incidents (for more information on reassurance, prevention and community support roles, please see [Hate Crime Prevention: An Important Complement and Supplement to Reactive, Enforcement-based Approaches](#)).

Additional resources

For a case study example that exemplifies the nexus that sometimes exists between hate crime and violent extremism, see:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCxwepW8k54>

Hate Crime Prevention: An Important Complement And Supplement To Reactive, Enforcement-Based Approaches

Background

Recent and significant spikes in hate crimes and incidents have prompted police services across Canada to identify hate crime prevention and control as operational priorities. While reactive, enforcement-based approaches represent an important means of holding accused persons accountable and providing access to justice and support for victims seeking redress, a comprehensive police response to hate crime also involves an emphasis on prevention.

Proactively working to prevent hate crimes can help to stem the tide of hate crimes and incidents and the immense harm they cause to victims, their broader communities, and society more generally. An emphasis on hate crime prevention alongside a strong, supportive and immediate reactive response also sends the message that the police service of jurisdiction is committed to devising, developing and implementing robust and multi-faceted strategies for addressing hate.

In addition to preventing, reducing and responding to hate crimes and incidents, the benefits of a dual enforcement/prevention focus may also include increased feelings of safety and security in affected communities, along with higher levels of satisfaction with, and confidence in, the police service of jurisdiction. Research demonstrates that such benefits are also generally associated with increases in perceived police legitimacy, which itself enhances the likelihood that community members will report hate crime victimization and offending to police and otherwise cooperate with the criminal justice process.¹¹⁰

This short research summary provides an overview of key terms and activities associated with hate crime prevention work, along with specific and evidence-based recommendations that frontline officers can apply to enhance the quality of their interactions with civilians, thereby helping to bolster community relationships and trust.

Key Terminology

Community-oriented policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the use of partnerships and collaborative problem-solving techniques to proactively address community safety issues. Community-oriented policing involves three main components:

1. Active police-community partnerships to identify local problems.
2. Adapting organizational management, structure and information systems to better support the community.
3. Working proactively and collaboratively to address local problems.¹¹¹

The concept of **police legitimacy** refers to the belief that the police are the appropriate authority to maintain social order, manage conflicts, and solve problems in the community. Police legitimacy is often measured in terms of:¹¹²

- The public's trust and confidence in police;
- A willingness to defer to the law and police authority; and
- The belief that police actions are justified and appropriate to the circumstances.

Perceptions of police legitimacy are important because they shape the extent to which an individual adheres to the law and is willing to assist police when necessary to help combat crime in the community, regardless of whether the outcome was favourable to their case.¹¹³

Procedural Justice Policing: A Template For Bolstering Police–Community Relationships And Trust

While enforcement and prevention activities are important components of a fulsome police response to hate crimes and incidents, their mere presence are not enough, on their own, to improve relationships and build trust. Research suggests that the quality of the interaction between police officers and community members plays a critically important role;¹¹⁶ positive interactions with the public and fair decision making can improve public perceptions of the police, help to reverse trust deficits, and enhance police legitimacy.

The concept of procedural justice (or procedural fairness) provides a useful framework to help officers achieve positive police-civilian interactions and the documented benefits that can stem from them. Procedural justice policing involves applying the four principles of procedural justice into all routine contacts with the public. These are:¹¹⁷

Voice



People need to have **the chance to tell their side of the story** and to feel that authority figures will listen and sincerely consider this before making a decision.

Neutrality



People need to see authority figures as **neutral and principled decision-makers**, who apply rules consistently, transparently and do not base their decisions on personal opinion or bias.

Respect



People need to feel **respected and treated courteously** by authority figures, believe their rights are considered equal to those of others and that their issues will be taken seriously.

Trustworthy motives



People need to see authority figures as people with **trustworthy motives**, who are sincere and authentic, who listen and care and who try to do what is right for everyone involved.

Reassurance Policing

A second mechanism that research suggests can increase the satisfaction of victims who encounter the police is a ‘call-back’ policy (i.e., “reassurance policing”), which involves proactively engaging with victims after their initial contact – by telephone or in-person visit (the latter is generally reserved for victims of serious violent crime) – regardless of their case status.¹¹⁸ The core purpose of the call-back is to check in with victims and offer access to a host of resources and supports to facilitate the healing process; doing so demonstrates to victims that the police of jurisdiction are committed to providing solidarity and support that extends beyond the initial report. Research suggests that call-backs do indeed offer reassurance and can lead to improved levels of victim satisfaction with police, an important antecedent to increased levels of perceived police legitimacy.¹¹⁹ Some research also suggests that these effects may be especially pronounced for victims from racialized and religious minority groups.¹²⁰

The notion of reassurance policing has been expanded in the context of hate crime to include the provision of security and support for affected communities in the wake of hate crimes perpetrated locally, elsewhere in Canada, or in other nations. For example, a 2017 attack by a white supremacist during evening prayers at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City resulted in the murder of six congregants and the critical wounding of five others. The attack set off an enormous amount of fear in Muslim communities that the incident might inspire copy-cat violence at mosques in other places. In response, police services of jurisdiction within and outside of Canada deployed variations of reassurance policing - most often involving a large, visible police presence at and patrols near local mosques. This response was intended to acknowledge the seriousness of what happened at the Islamic Cultural Centre, to recognize the broader potential risk posed to Islamic spaces and events, to stand in solidarity with Muslim communities, and to quell high levels of fear in the community. Such highly visible forms of police reassurance are also intended to deter potential offenders from perpetrating hate crimes and incidents, by increasing the perceived risk of detection and arrest.

Building capacity for hate crime prevention requires organizational adaptations and strategies that support the systematic use of community engagement, partnerships and proactive approaches to identify and address community safety issues. While many police services have community policing and engagement strategies built-into their broader operational plans, international research shows that the level of organizational commitment to this work is uneven; some services engage in deep and sustained community policing and engagement alongside enforcement-based activities, while others evidence less commitment to proactive engagement and relationship-building in the community.¹²¹

Either way, individual officers can contribute to broader prevention and engagement efforts by applying the principles of procedural justice to all citizen interactions and providing post-incident reassurance to victims of hate and their broader communities. Research shows that consistent adherence to the principles of procedural justice and reassurance policing can play a key role in fostering enhanced levels of perceived police legitimacy and, by extension, citizen cooperation – which itself can help prevent, reduce and/or respond to a host of community safety issues, including (but not limited to) hate crimes and incidents.¹²²

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