

2017 Annual Hate/Bias Crime Statistical Report

Background

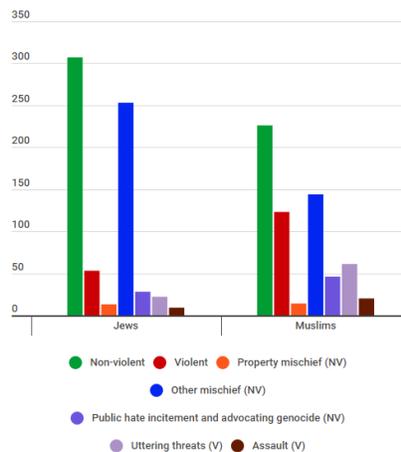
In 2017, there was an upsurge in the over-all number of reported hate crimes across Canada. Statistics Canada reports indicate that hate crimes have been steadily rising since 2014 but rapidly increased by 47 per cent in 2017. In total, Canadian police forces reported 2,073 hate crimes in 2017 – the most since 2009. Increases were largely driven by incidents in Ontario and Quebec. Statistics Canada stated that the increase may have been determined by more people reporting hateful incidents to police, though many incidents remain unreported. (Rieti, 2018)

The available statistics from 2017, in comparison to those of 2016, demonstrate an increase from 145 to 186 representing a difference of approximately 28%. Over the past ten years, between 2008 and 2017, the average number of reported hate crimes was approximately 147 per annum. The number of arrests related to hate crimes in 2017 increased as well. As in previous years, the number of arrests for hate motivated offences was attributed to allegations of mischief to property (i.e. graffiti) in circumstances where there was little or no suspect description available. These occurrences frequently transpired without the victim or any witnesses present. These factors present significant challenges to the investigation into hate motivated offences and arresting suspects. (Canada, 2018)

The greatest increase in the overall number of police-reported hate crimes was observed in Ontario, Canada's most populous province, where incidents rose from 612 in 2016 to 1,023 in 2017 (+67%). This increase was largely fueled by increased hate crimes targeting the Jewish (+41%) Muslim (+207%), and Black (+84%) populations. (Canada, 2018)

Police-reported hate crime, 2017

This chart shows a selection of hate crime targeting Jews and Muslims in Canada in 2017. "V" signifies an offence that falls under "violent crime," "NV" signifies an offence that falls under "non-violent crime."



Data via Statistics Canada

Hate crimes against religion accounted for 41% of all hate crime in Canada in 2017 and the number of such hate crimes was up significantly from 2016. There were 842 hate crimes targeting religious groups in 2017, up 83% from the previous year. Hate crimes against the Jewish population increased for the second consecutive year, rising from 221 in 2016 to 360 in 2017. Ontario reported 61 more incidents, while British Columbia reported an increase of 54 over 2016. (Canada, 2018)

Four out of the ten Canadian urban areas with the highest hate crime rates are in the Greater Toronto region. Police services covering Hamilton, Peterborough, York Region and Guelph, recorded hate crime rates per 100,000 putting their cities among the top ten highest in the country in 2017. Hamilton, Ontario saw the highest rate of any jurisdiction in the region and the third highest in the country, at 16 incidents per 100,000 people. (Brownell, 2018)

The Toronto Police Service Hate Crime Statistical Report is an annual report providing statistical data about criminal offences committed against persons or property motivated by the victim's race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or other similar factor. The data is based on hate crimes reported to the Toronto Police Service, between January 1, 2017 and December 31,

2017. (Intelligence Services, 2018) Jews have been the single most targeted victim group in Toronto for the past decade, according to police data. The number of incidents targeting Jews increased by 23 per cent in 2017 over 2016, when Jews were the victims of 43 occurrences, or about 30 per cent. (Lungen, 2018)

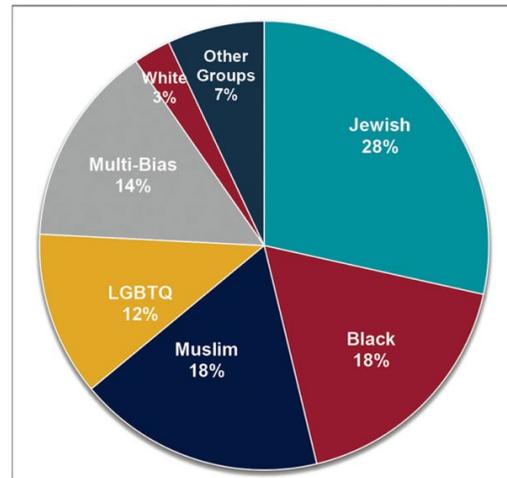
In 2017, the Greater Toronto area Jewish community, followed by the Black community, the Muslim community, and the LGBTQ community were the groups most frequently victimized. Incidents targeting individuals with multiple identities, called multi-bias occurrences, with 27, and LGBTQ with 22. When the religious component of multi-bias crimes is included – such as victims being identified by perpetrators as both black and Jewish, or Ukrainian and Jewish – the number of Jewish victims increases to 66, or 35 per cent of all incidents.

The three most frequently reported criminal offences motivated by hate in 2017 were mischief to property, assault and utter threats. The Jewish community was the most frequently victimized group for mischief offences, such as graffiti on property, with 46 occurrences; the LGBTQ community was the most frequently victimized group for assault occurrences; and the Muslim community was the most frequently victimized group for criminal harassment occurrences. There were five incidents of uttering threats to cause bodily harm or threatening death and two involving the wilful promotion of hatred targeting Jewish community members. (Intelligence Services, 2018) It is important to note that any crime can be considered a hate crime if the motivation has been proven.

Key Points

- The 2017 statistics find that the overall number of reported hate and bias crimes increased across the country. For Canadian Jews, the last three years have seen a steady increase in the number of incidents of hate crimes, from 178 in 2015 (13 per cent of all occurrences), to 221 in 2016 (16 per cent) to 360 in 2017 (18 per cent). The trend is in line with an increase in anti-Semitic attacks around the world in recent years.
- Ontario saw a 207 per cent increase in hate crimes against Muslims, an 84 per cent increase in crimes against black people and 41 per cent increase on incidents against Jewish people. In the Toronto-area, hate crimes motivated by religion account for the vast majority of occurrences; 28 per cent in 2017 directed at Jewish people and 18 per cent directed at the Muslim community.

Figure 6.1: Hate Occurrences by Victimized Groups 2017



(Toronto Police Service)

- The Toronto-area Jewish community saw an increase of 41% in reported hate crime incidents

Community Impact

Hate and bias crimes have a disproportionately greater effect on their victims than other types of crimes. Hate and bias motivated crimes have longer-lasting grave side-effects for society. The effects of these crimes ripple through the very fabric of our communities. Hate and bias motivated crimes not only victimizes the individual, but also the entire group that individual belongs to, resulting in the increased isolation, stress and vulnerability of that group.

There needs to be a familiarity between the community and a relationship with specific members of law enforcement they can reach out to in an emergency. Hate crimes need to be reported to the police and proactive community-based organizations. Under-reporting presents a challenge to law enforcement as victims might be reluctant to come forward out of embarrassment, fear of retaliation, or uncertainty about how they'll be received. If police do not respond to reports of hate and bias crimes immediately and appropriately, these crimes can lead to increased social conflict between opposing groups and can ultimately result in retaliatory occurrences. Conversely, a timely and effective police response can have a positive and lasting influence on the relationship between police and the communities they serve. Positive relationships such as these could have extensive benefits in other aspects of public safety.

Analysis

The surge in statistical hate crimes related data is very unsettling for our communities. We must remain vigilant and continue to work strategically with our partners in law enforcement and government to combat hate and hate-related crimes. Education on all fronts (community, student, government and law enforcement) is of paramount important in our ongoing battle against hate.

References

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