

SNAPSHOT OF HATE IN WATERLOO REGION



2025
MILESTONE
REPORT

 Centre for
Mutual Wellbeing
For Racialized Communities

WAYS TO REPORT HATE

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ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR MUTUAL WELLBEING (CMW)

Founded in 2010, the Centre for Mutual Wellbeing (formerly The Coalition of Muslim Women of Kitchener-Waterloo) was built on the strength and leadership of a handful of racialized Muslim Women determined to stand up against hate, discrimination, Islamophobia, and gender-based violence. What began as a grassroots movement has grown into a dynamic organization serving diverse racialized communities across the Waterloo Region. Guided by a deep commitment to upstream, preventative work, Centre for Mutual Wellbeing (CMW) delivers innovative and culturally responsive programs that address systemic barriers to social and economic inclusion. With a focus on public education, anti-hate initiatives, housing, and gender-based violence, CMW continues to work toward a just, harmonious, inclusive, and equitable community for all.

PROJECT FUNDER



Region of Waterloo



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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

“AHS has solidified itself into an important stop in our community on the journey to identify and heal [from hate].”

-CMW staff

Anti-Hate Services (AHS) got its start in 2021 with CMW nurturing the project into what it is known as today. Over the past five years in particular, AHS has grown from a community response to crisis into a trusted, community-rooted model for reporting, support, advocacy, and systems change. What began as a local commitment to ensure people experiencing hate had somewhere safe to turn has evolved into one of Ontario’s earliest community-based anti-hate reporting initiatives, a model grounded not only in documentation, but in care, dignity, and action.

Through annual reporting, community education, frontline advocacy, and direct support, this work has helped bring experiences of hate out of isolation and into public conversation. AHS annual reports have created an important community record, one that reflects not only statistics, but the lived realities behind them. Together, they have documented changing patterns of hate across Waterloo Region while consistently centering the voices of those most impacted, particularly youth, women, racialized communities, immigrants, and faith communities.

Over time, the work has expanded beyond reporting alone. AHS has become a place where people seek support navigating schools, housing, workplaces, online harm, legal systems, and community safety concerns. It has created pathways for people who may not feel safe engaging formal systems, while also building stronger community understanding around prevention, accountability, and healing. The following captures the AHS journey.

○ **2021- Launching a Community-Led Alternative**

In 2021, Anti-Hate Services (AHS) as it is known today, was funded and officially launched by the CMW as the first municipal-level, community-based hate reporting model of its kind in Ontario. The program emerged at a moment of heightened fear and urgency following the infamous and tragic London, Ontario van attack, responding directly to growing local experiences of Islamophobia, racism, and xenophobia. From the beginning, the work centered culturally grounded, trauma-informed support for people who did not feel safe turning to police or other formal reporting systems.

○ **2022- Building Community Accountability**

In 2022, AHS released the first Snapshot of Hate in Waterloo Region report, creating an ongoing community-based record of hate incidents and lived experiences in the region. The report helped shift community storytelling and survivor experiences into recognized forms of evidence, advocacy, and accountability. This year also marked the beginning of stronger regional partnerships focused on prevention, education, and long-term systems change.

○ **2023- Growth, Escalation & Deepening Trust**

By 2023, AHS documented a significant increase in hate incidents across Waterloo Region, alongside a major surge in reporting following October 7. The year highlighted how global events were shaping local realities, with rising Islamophobia, antisemitism, anti-Palestinian hate, and racism being reported across the community. As reporting grew, AHS doubled down into broader community and individualized support, including system navigation, legal and school advocacy, restorative justice, housing support, and mental health referrals. The year also reinforced the importance of trusted, community-led spaces for people who may never otherwise report their experiences.

○ 2024- Expanding Beyond the Region

In 2024, AHS saw continued growth both in the number of reported incidents (up 38%) and in the geographic reach of the program, with people across Ontario increasingly using the platform. Online hate emerged as the most reported setting for incidents, reflecting the growing role digital spaces play in spreading harm and polarization. The report also documented sharp increases in xenophobia (up 33%) and multiple forms of hate targeting marginalized communities. As demand expanded, AHS deepened its role as a trauma-informed support hub grounded in culturally responsive care, while significantly growing community outreach and engagement.

○ 2025 – Sustaining Community Care Through Uncertainty

In 2025, AHS documented 162 hate incidents through the reporting line and gathered a total of 289 community reports through both direct reporting and the “Hate is Not Okay” survey. The year reflected both the continued escalation and normalization of hate across online spaces, schools, workplaces, neighbourhoods, and public settings, with racism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, antisemitism, anti-Black racism, and anti-immigrant hate consistently shaping people’s experiences. Online remained one of the most reported spaces for harm, while public spreading of hate, intimidation, and calls for exclusion became increasingly visible in everyday community life online and off.

At the same time, 2025 highlighted the deep emotional and social impacts of hate, with many people describing fear, trauma, isolation, humiliation, and ongoing anxiety connected to their experiences. Female/female-identified people, youth, visibly identifiable minorities, and people wearing cultural or religious apparel continued to be disproportionately targeted. The report also reinforced the intersectional nature of hate, showing how racism, xenophobia, sexism, Islamophobia, homophobia, and other forms of prejudice frequently overlap and compound harm.

Despite a six-month funding pause that significantly limited outreach and direct support capacity, AHS managed to provide trauma-informed support, systems navigation, school advocacy, legal referrals, restorative justice options, and culturally responsive mental health connections for community members seeking help. The year underscored both the fragility and necessity of community-based anti-hate infrastructure, demonstrating how trusted relationships, accessible reporting pathways, and consistent care remain essential for communities often excluded from or hesitant to engage formal systems.

What stands out most across these years is not only the increase in reporting, but the increase in trust. More people are coming forward. More people are seeking support. More communities are recognizing themselves in this work. And while the reports continue to remind us of the urgency of addressing hate, they also reflect something equally important: the power of community-led responses grounded in care, relationships, and collective responsibility.

The AHS legacy is still being written. But over the last five years, Anti-Hate Services has helped build something essential for Waterloo Region and beyond, a living framework for community safety that believes people, supports them, and refuses to let their experiences go unseen.



Sharing experiences of hate takes immense courage, and many people never feel safe enough to come forward. This report does not capture every story. It reflects the voices of those who could share their experiences and reminds us of all those still carrying harm in silence.

THANK YOU FOR
JOINING US

SECTION 2

ANTI-HATE SERVICES (AHS)



ANTI-HATE SERVICES (AHS)

Anti-Hate Services (AHS), is a program where community members are able to report hate that they have experienced themselves, witnessed, or on behalf of someone or a community that has been affected. Those who report are also able to ask for help, at which time CMW will reach out to engage around their support needs. At the time of its launch, in April 2021, this reporting service was the first of its kind at the municipal level, and remains such to this day. AHS also engages in important awareness and trust building outreach activities centered around prevention and encouraging the reporting of instances of hate. These activities include but aren't limited to: bridge-building meetings, visits, sessions with partners, presentations, booths, speaking events and participating on panels at community events. Sometimes, this outreach work can feel like workshops and other times, it is more focused as education sessions. Over the years of this program's existence, a strong community presence has been directly linked to increases in reporting and requests for help, solidifying that, with relationships and trust, often more people feel empowered to report their experiences.

This year was difficult for the AHS program. While the report line remained, a pause in funding of six months meant that requested support and the programs outreach activities were not able to proceed. This caused significant strain on the program's ability to support people reporting experiences of hate and in building and retaining trust with people in the community. Still, the program persevered the best it could by providing support to 34 people who requested it through the AHS report line and they saw folks highlight areas of potential support based on where they felt impacted from the experience of hate they were reporting.

Of the 34 people who requested and received additional support when they reported through the AHS line, the most common request (44%/15 cases) was for emotional support and systems navigation, and then support working with a

Anti Hate Services for the community



- Hate Reporting System (reportinghate.ca): Documenting hate incidents
- One on One Supports for Victims
- 'Sulah' – Mediation & Restorative Justice
- Counselling referrals, mental health supports
- Contacting Police services when needed
- Speaking to concerned authorities to address incidents of discrimination, racism, Islamophobia
- Advocacy for cases related to Ontario Human Rights Tribunal



service provider representing 24% of cases (8). Giving referrals, working with a lawyer, law enforcement and also working with schools/school boards were among the remaining support requests.

“I am incredibly nervous to be speaking up and also embarrassed because I will be brushed off or told that ‘it's all in my head’. Thank you for your help and I look forward to getting rid of the hate and having acceptance among Canadians. No one should be hated for what they believe in.”

- Reported through AHS

Those completing the survey were asked about the personal impact the experience of hate had on them. This question highlighted the depth of impact an experience of hate can have and the importance of having support available. One-hundred and two female/female-identified individuals completed the survey. Among these responses, 68% (69 cases) said the experience had an emotional or mental health impact, 59% (60 cases) said they felt unsafe, 16% (17 cases) said the experience impacted their work or education and 3 responded with ‘other’.

Among all survey participants, 127 responses, 60% (77 cases) said that the experience had an emotional or mental health impact, 57% (72 cases) said they felt unsafe, and 17% (21 cases) stated there was an impact on their work or education and three responded with “other.”

Demonstrations of the impact of hate were common in the written portions of reporting. A dominant theme across reports is the lasting emotional impact of hate incidents. People describe anxiety, trauma, humiliation, fear, and emotional devastation that continue long after the incident itself. The harm is not only immediate, but deeply personal and ongoing, especially for young people and those directly targeted:

“These young boys were all undeservingly humiliated and are now suffering from anxiety.”

- Reported through AHS

“I am deeply saddened by the disrespect and discrimination I experienced, which significantly impacted my mental health as a 17-year-old student.”

- Reported through AHS

“It was an incredibly traumatic experience—one I wouldn’t wish on my worst enemy.”

- Reported through AHS

“It has led to so much mental anxiety that I find my voice shakes.”

- Reported through AHS

Many experiences describe people being pushed out socially after experiencing hate. Exclusion from activities, alienation, and feeling unwelcome emerge as recurring forms of harm that compound the original incident:

“They first called me many slurs... Then they started excluding me in activities.”

- Reported through AHS

“We are very disappointed... we are just afraid we might have to leave Canada if this continues.”

- Reported through AHS

Several reports emphasize the intensity of hatred people witnessed or experienced. Respondents describe shock at the cruelty directed toward them and the normalization of disrespect and discrimination:

“I was frozen in place, shocked and horrified by the amount of hatred and cruelty I witnessed.”

- Reported through AHS

Community members reporting hate remind us in these quotes about the connected nature of reporting and receiving accessible support. The pause in funding this past year meant that AHS couldn't offer the same degree of outreach and support in Waterloo Region that it is known for and is needed. As part of the AHS program, the following support options are provided and support stays active until the victim is ready to close their case; however cases can be reopened if needed.



Mental health supports/ counselling

Connects people to culturally relevant mental health supports offered through community partner agencies, with financial costs covered by CMW where needed.



Assistance in formal reporting/ filing

Support preparing and filing cases with authorities such as Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, local bylaw officers, hospital administrations and health services, public transit services, housing boards, the Landlord and Tenant Board, school administration, and post-secondary institutions.



System navigation

Assistance with service navigation to overcome systemic barriers when accessing services within systems. This included connecting with service providers, resource sharing, formal referrals, links to geographically specific resources, support understanding processes and ongoing email and phone conversations.



Legal support

Access to free legal advice, referrals, and finding appropriate legal representation for victims. Providing coordinating and case support throughout the experience.



Sulah Program

Restorative justice/mediation services offered in partnership with Community Justice Initiatives.

Supports offered in housing conflicts



Helping people to maintain their housing through support in mitigating conflicts, discriminatory behaviour, property damage and/or verbal abuse as well as support with the resulting trauma and harm from these incidents. In addition, supporting people who rent who decide to move due to ongoing experiences of hate.

Supports offered in schools



Advocating for students and families facing race- and culture-based bullying, harassment, and discrimination included training, workshops, bridge building, and education, alongside direct engagement with schools, school boards, and post-secondary institutions, as many cases involved conflict with administration connected to experiences of hate, while community prevention work also expanded through initiatives like student orientation sessions.

Advocacy



Advocacy efforts for systems change focused on prevention through social change, as well as changes in the delivery/access to services in more equitable ways to prevent discrimination.

“We keep following after the case is closed. We keep humanity and care with this program. We are dedicated to this piece of the work. If they need anything else, they can come back and we can reopen cases until the issue is resolved for good.”

-CMW Staff

A woman with dark hair, wearing a patterned sari and a necklace, is looking down at a smartphone. She is in a crowded setting, possibly a market or a community gathering. The background shows other people and a table. The image has a purple tint.

SECTION 3

DATA COLLECTION

DATA COLLECTION

The primary data that informs this report comes from two sources. The first source is data received through the AHS program. Between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025, 162 cases were reported to the reporting hate line. This service provides an opportunity for reporting hate online, in person, over the phone, through the use of WhatsApp, over email and to CMW staff directly or indirectly through their community connections. The second source is data collected through their “Hate is Not Okay” survey, which gathered 132 responses and asked similar questions to those asked through the AHS hate reporting line. This survey was conducted between January and March 2026 but participants were asked to reflect on incidents that happened between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025. The survey was promoted online and at community events and aimed to engage communities less familiar with AHS and the reporting line. Events like Black History Month, Eid, Ramadan and others were attended and the survey was available in paper copies, through QR codes, or online with provided tablets.

All data collected through both sources is confidential. It is not shared with any other system, including police, unless explicitly asked/agreed upon by the person reporting and/or victim. Further, for this report, details from the data collected through AHS and the “Hate is Not Okay” survey have been removed to protect the anonymity and ensure the safety of those who shared their experiences.

Hate Is Not Okay

Have You Experienced Hate in Waterloo Region in 2025?

We need to hear your voice!



Coalition of
Muslim Women
Kitchener-Waterloo

MUSLIM WOMEN MAKING CHANGE!



Empowerment and
Support



Social Activism



Equity, Inclusion,
and Diversity



SECTION 4

DATA TRENDS

TRENDS IN REPORTING

In 2025, Anti-Hate Services (AHS) continued to show something that has remained true across every year of this work: hate is vastly underreported through formal systems, while trusted, community-based spaces continue to receive disclosures that might otherwise remain invisible. Through the AHS reporting line and the “Hate is Not Okay” survey, a total of 289 reports were documented this year. Yet, of the 176 people who answered whether they had reported their experience to police, only 13 said they had. A total of 163 said they had not. That gap matters.

The reasons people gave for not reporting reflected ongoing distrust in institutions and a fear that nothing meaningful would happen if they came forward. Across reports, people described police, schools, workplaces, landlords, online platforms, and management structures as dismissive, ineffective, or protective of those causing harm. One person shared that after following up with police they were told there was *“nothing they could do about the incident.”* Others described concerns being *“continually deferred”* or communities that *“protect the abuser.”* Parents described stigma around reporting publicly or privately, while others spoke about emotional exhaustion from repeatedly watching systems fail to intervene.

This data also reinforces how important trusted relationships are in the reporting process. Many people first disclosed experiences of hate to family members, friends, neighbours, or community organizations before ever considering a formal report. In communities where culturally grounded reporting options are not widely known or consistently funded, many experiences simply remain unreported altogether.

The differences between police data and AHS reporting also continue to highlight the importance of community-based reporting models. Waterloo Regional Police Services reported 224 hate-motivated crimes in 2025 and noted

that Black individuals remained the most targeted racialized group in police data. However, AHS reporting showed South Asian individuals represented the largest racialized group across reports at 24% (68 cases), followed by Arab and West Asian individuals at 20% (59 cases). Police data documented only 28 incidents targeting South Asian individuals, suggesting many experiences impacting these communities may not be reaching formal systems at all.

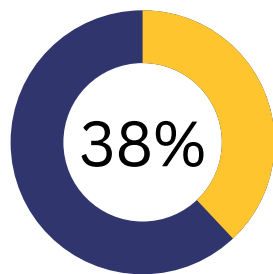
Intersectionality was reflected in reporting this year, with experiences of hate rarely tied to only one identity or form of prejudice. Alongside racism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia, reports increasingly reflected overlapping experiences involving sexism and misogyny, anti-Black racism, antisemitism, homophobia, transphobia, and disablism. Across all 289 reports, 11% identified antisemitism as a factor, 6% involved sexism and/or misogyny, 6% included anti-Black racism, 4% involved homophobia, 4% involved transphobia, and 3% involved disablism. Female/female-identified people represented 46% of victims, while youth under 25 accounted for 18% of reports, reinforcing how hate continues to disproportionately impact people navigating multiple layers of marginalization. Online spaces accounted for 41% of all reported incidents, but schools, workplaces, transit, neighbourhoods, and public spaces all remained significant sites where these overlapping forms of harm were experienced.



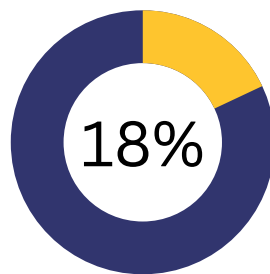
Demographics

Gender

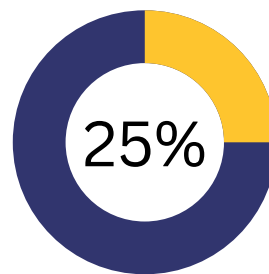
As part of the process of reporting incidents of hate, people were asked to provide the gender of the victim of the incident. From these responses, 134 cases (46%) included a female or female-identified victim, 53 cases (18%) included a male or male-identified victim, 72 cases (25%) included groups/communities being targeted where gender did not apply, two cases included non-binary victims, three cases responded with 'other' and 20 cases were unknown.



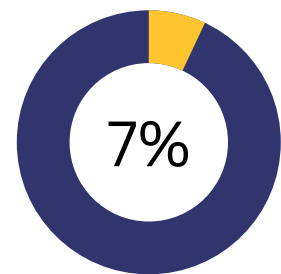
Female/ female-
Identified



Male/ male-
Identified



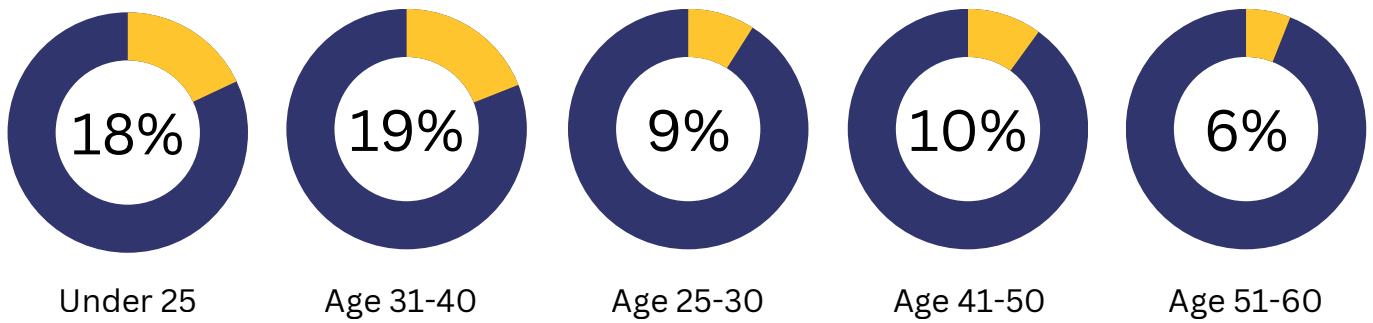
Groups/
Communities



Other

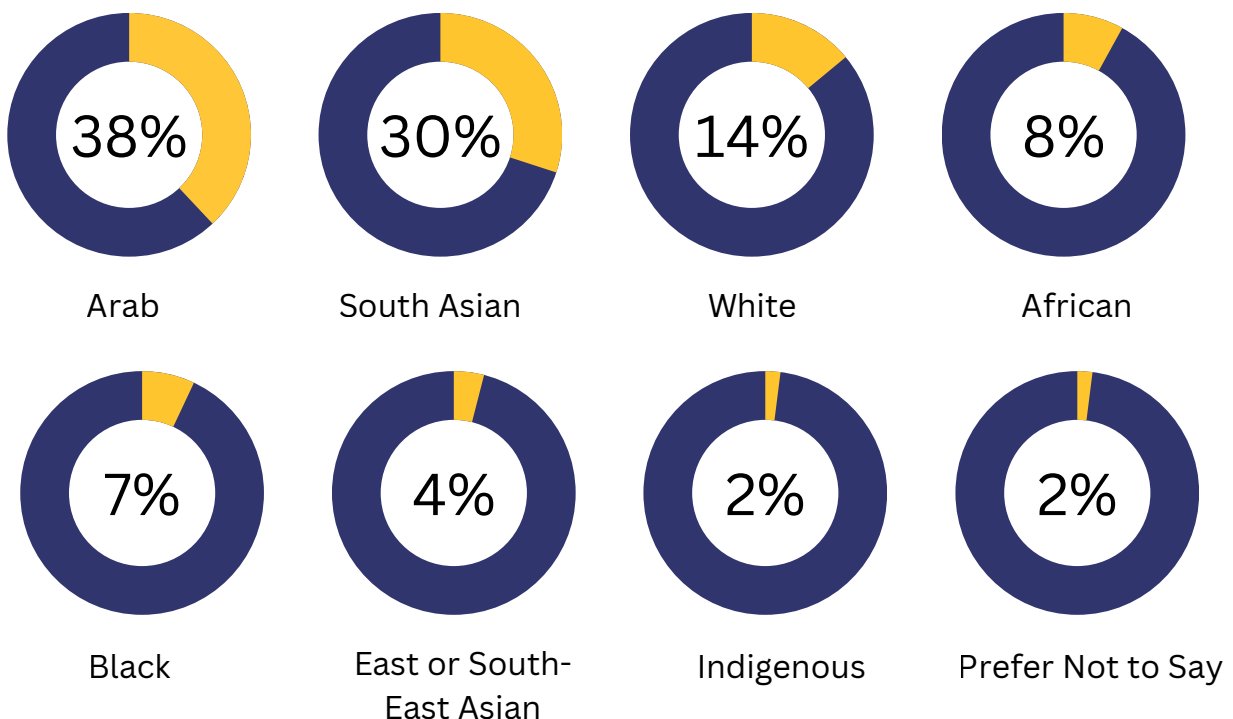
Age

In addition to gender, those reporting hate were also asked about the age group of the victim. From these responses, the most prominent age group represented as victims were those between the ages of 31-40 with 54 cases (19%), followed by youth under the age of 25 with 53 cases (18%). Those ages 25-30 accounted for 26 cases (9%), those 41-50 accounted for 28 cases (10%), those 51-60 accounted for 16 cases (6%), with seniors between 61-70 accounting for 8 reports and victims over 70 years old accounting for two cases. In addition to this, 22 cases (7%) were reported with ages unknown, six cases preferred not to disclose age and 74 cases (26%) included a group or community that was targeted where age did not apply.



Race/ Ethnicity of Victim

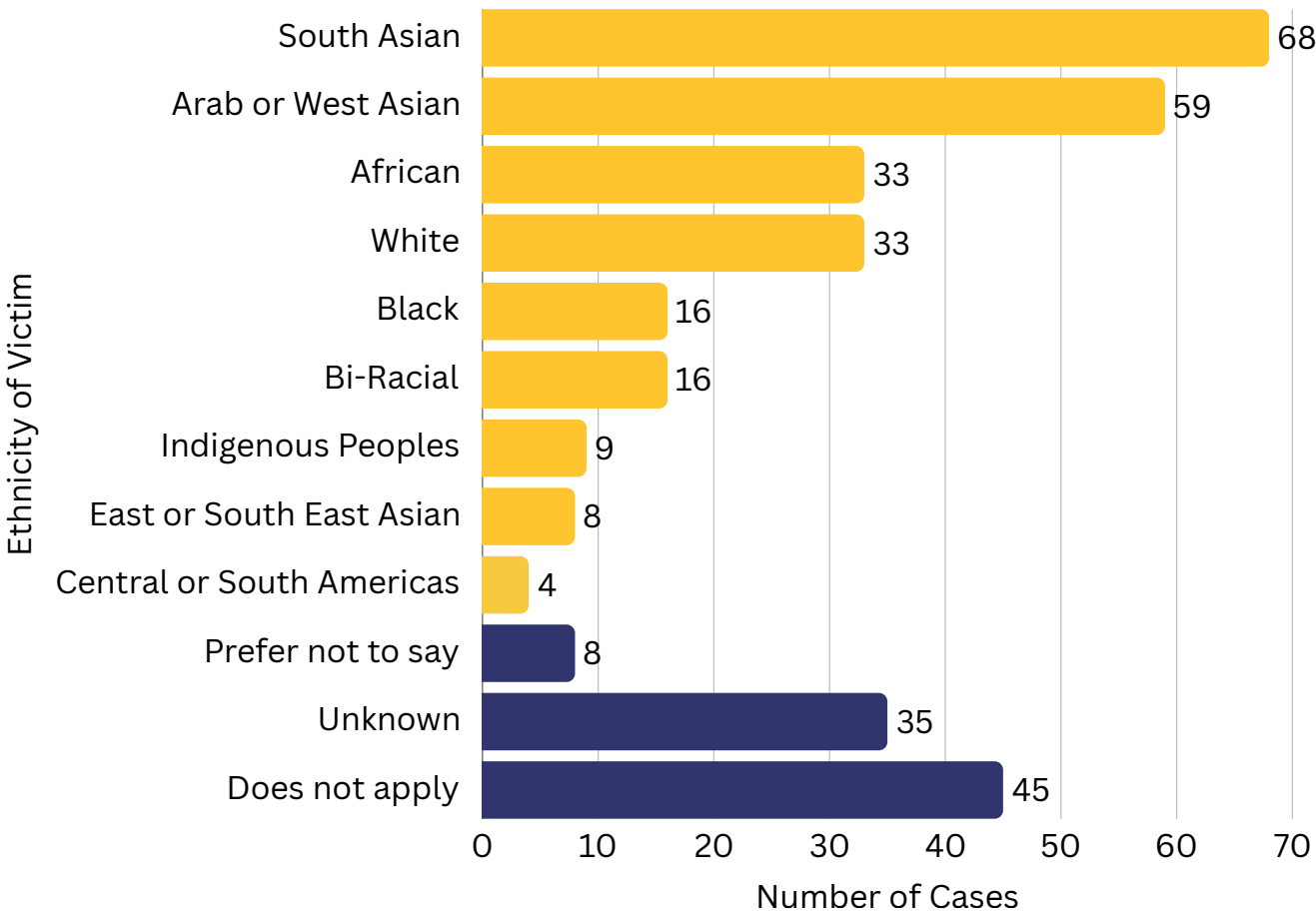
Those reporting hate were asked the race/ethnicity of the victim. Of the 134 cases that included female/female-identified victims, 51 (38%) were Arab or West Asian, 40 (30%) were South Asian, 19 (14%) were White, 10 (8%) were African, 9 (7%) were Black, 6 (4%) were East or South-East Asian, 2 (2%) were Indigenous Peoples, 2 (2%) preferred not to say, one was bi-racial and one was from Central or South Americas.





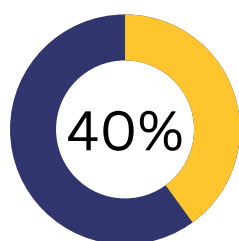
When looking at the race/ethnicity of victims across all 289 cases, 68 (24%) were South Asian, 59 (20%) were Arab or West Asian, 33 (11%) were African, 33 (11%) were White, 16 (6%) were Black, 16 (6%) were bi-racial, 9 (3%) were Indigenous Peoples, 8 (3%) were East or South East Asian, four (1%) were Central or South American. Eight cases preferred not to say, 35 cases were unknown and 45 cases stated ethnicity did not apply because a diverse group was affected.

Ethnicity Across Reported Cases

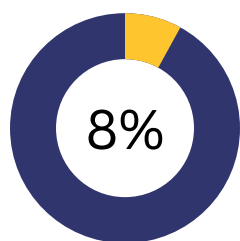


Religion of Victim

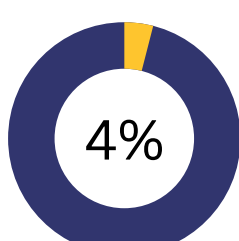
Those reporting hate were asked the religion of the victim. Of the total reports, 116 (40%) victims were identified as Muslim, 23 (8%) responded as Christian, 17 (6%) responded as Jewish, 12 (4%) responded as Hindu, 9 (3%) responded as Indigenous spirituality, 9 (3%) responded as Sikh, two responded as Buddhist, and nine responded as 'other.' Further, 40 (14%) responded that they prefer not to say, 37 (13%) responded that the religion was not known, and 15 (5%) responded 'no religion.'



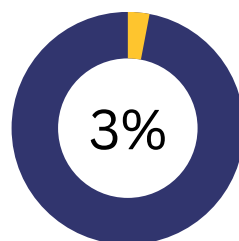
Muslim



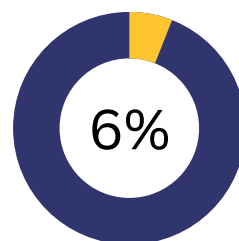
Christian



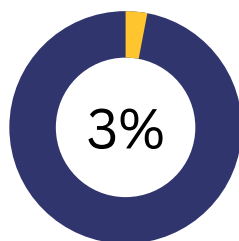
Hindu



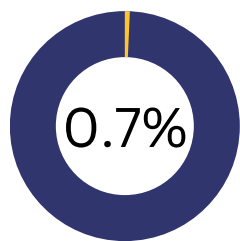
Sikh



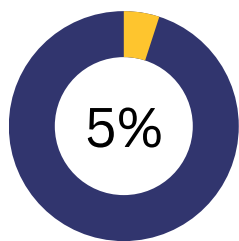
Jewish



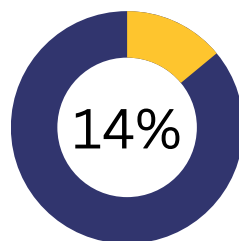
Indigenous Spirituality



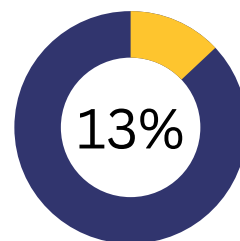
Buddhist



No Religion



Prefer Not to Say



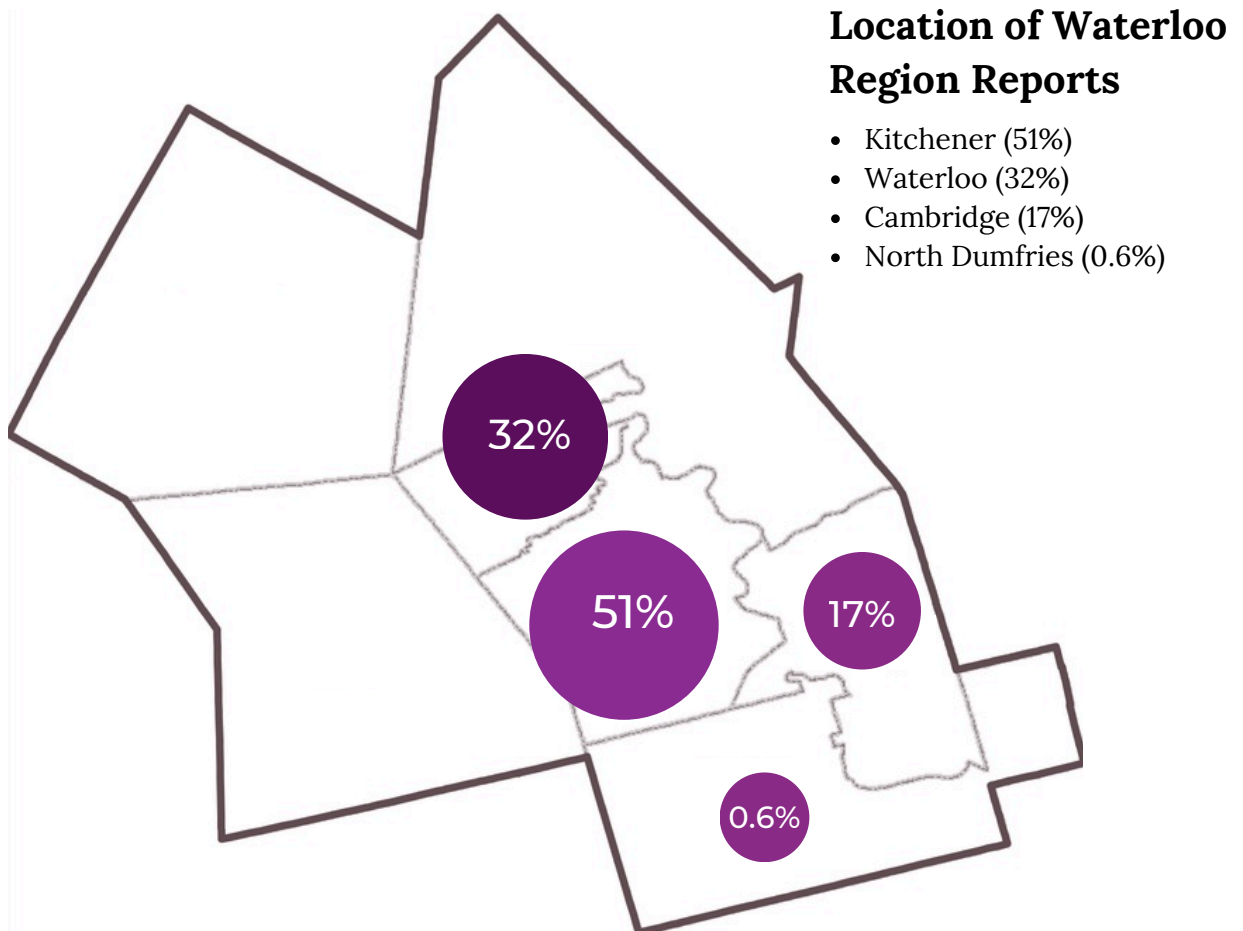
Don't Know



Geographic location of reported incidents

A total of 172 cases happened in spaces/places within the geographic boundaries of Waterloo Region, making up 60% of total cases. A further 37 cases (13%) were from locations elsewhere in Ontario, including Guelph and the Greater Toronto Area. Beyond this, 26 reports were from other provinces, in total all but three provinces were represented in reporting data. A total of 19 reports were classified as 'other' (inclusive of online reporting that was Canada-wide in focus) and 35 reports remained unspecified.

Locally, Waterloo Region's urban centres were more likely to be locations of reported hate, Kitchener accounting for 87 cases (51%), Waterloo accounting for 55 cases (32%). Further, Cambridge accounted for 29 cases (17%), and the townships accounted for one case.



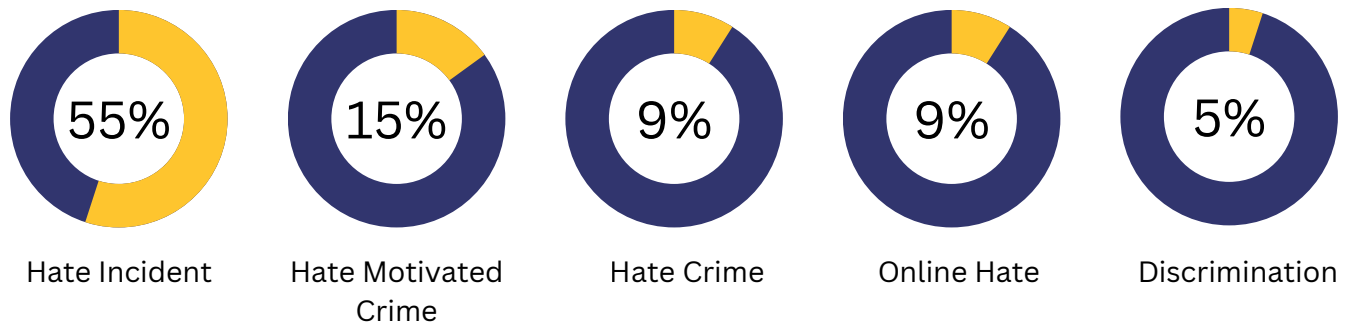


Types of hate experienced

Incidents reported through AHS are classified into the following categories based on the context and details provided:

- **Hate Crime** - Criminal offences (promoting genocide, public incitement, and hatred) against an identifiable minority group that are specified in the Criminal code of Canada.
- **Hate Motivated Crime** - Criminal acts with an element of hate, based in race, religion, ethnicity, gender, etc.
- **Hate Incident** - Non-criminal harmful actions against an identifiable minority group that are specified in the Charter or OHRC.
- **Discrimination** - Unequal treatment in employment, housing, contracts, etc., because of race, religion, gender, etc. (OHRC).
- **Online Hate** - Defined as any hateful posts to or about a person or group based on their race, religion, ethnicity, gender, etc.

Of the 33 cases that came through the reporting line that included female/female-identified victims, 55% of cases (18) were classified as hate incidents, 15% of cases (5) were classified as a hate motivated crime, 9% of cases (3) were classified as a hate crime, 9% of cases (3) were classified as online hate, one case was classified as discrimination and 3% of cases (2) were unknown.

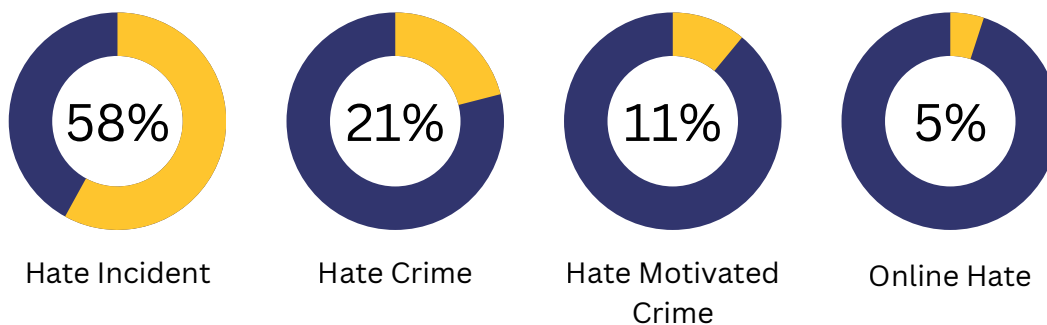


Across all 134 cases, including the reporting line and survey, verbal hate/harassment was present in 72% of the cases (96), threats of violence were present in 13% of cases (17), physical violence was present in 8% of cases (11), publicly spreading hate and/or inciting genocide was present in 7% of cases (9), and discrimination, online abuse and vandalism were present in three cases each. Other was selected in seven cases and four cases did not want to share.

“I was walking toward X when an older white woman stopped, stared at me, and I asked if she was okay. She responded, ‘No’, then pointed at me and asked, ‘Why are you dressed like that in Canada?’ I replied by asking her why she was dressed the way she was, to which she said, ‘My choice’. I responded, ‘Exactly, it’s my choice too’...This was a targeted verbal incident based on my appearance and religious attire (hijab), and it made me feel harassed and unsafe in a public space. This reflects a pattern of discriminatory and hateful behavior toward Muslim women in the area.”

- Reported through AHS

Of the 19 cases that came through the reporting line that included youth under the age of 25 as victims, 58% (11) were classified as a hate incident, 21% (4) were classified as a hate crime, 11% (2) were classified as a hate motivated crime, 5% (1) was classified as online hate, and one case was unknown.



Across all 53 cases concerning youth under the age of 25, including the reporting line and survey, verbal hate/harassment was present in 75% (40), publicly spreading hate and/or inciting genocide was present in 8% (4), physical violence was present in 8% (4), threats of violence was present in 4% (2), vandalism was present in 4% (2), displaying or spreading hateful symbols/images/posters/literature was present in 4% (2) and bullying/intimidation and online abuse each saw one case, and ‘other’ was selected for three cases.

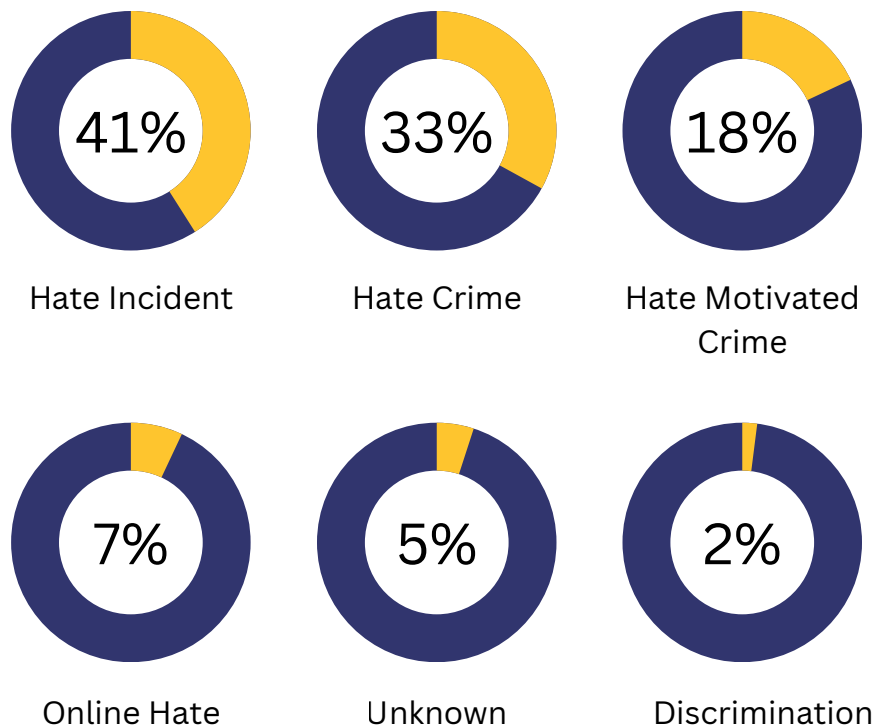
“With a rising number of bi-racial kids, and white kids that are small and round of all different shapes and sizes, they should not be bullied and allowed an open forum like this to operate to funnel the hate and allow for false impersonation to blast one's character.”

- Reported through AHS

“After initially targeting the girls, she continued to verbally attack all the teenagers, who were all immigrant youth, using further racially and religiously motivated insults. The youth reported the incident to the program coordinators.”

- Reported through AHS

Of the 162 cases that came through the reporting line, 41% (66) were classified as hate incidents, 33% (54) were classified as hate crimes, 11% (18) were classified as a hate motivated crime, 7% (12) were classified as online hate, 2% (3) were classified as discrimination, and nine cases were unknown. It is important to recognize that, for several months, discrimination was not offered as an option for reporting due to a form malfunction and that number is expected to be higher than this considering previous years' numbers.



Across all 289 cases, including the reporting line and survey, verbal hate/harassment was present in 57% of the cases (164), publicly spreading hate and/or inciting genocide was present in 30% of cases (49), threats of violence were present in 7% of cases (20), physical violence was present in 4% of cases (13), vandalism was present in 4% of cases (11), displaying or spreading hateful symbols/images/posters/literature was present in 4% of cases (11), online abuse was present in 3% of cases (10), bullying and intimidation was present in 1% of cases (3), and 19 cases were categorized as “other.”

Data collected from Waterloo Region Police Services

According to a memo titled *Community Safety & Wellbeing: Annual Hate-Motivated Crime Report* by the WRPS Community Safety Partnerships, 224 hate-motivated crimes were reported to police in 2025 across Waterloo Region, a decrease of 5% from 2024. The majority of reported incidents were non-violent (53%). Broken down further, 43% of the non-violent calls were for mischief (including things such as offensive graffiti). Overall, 18% (39 calls) were for a level 1 assault.

Breakdown of Police Reported Hate-Motivated Crimes in 2025

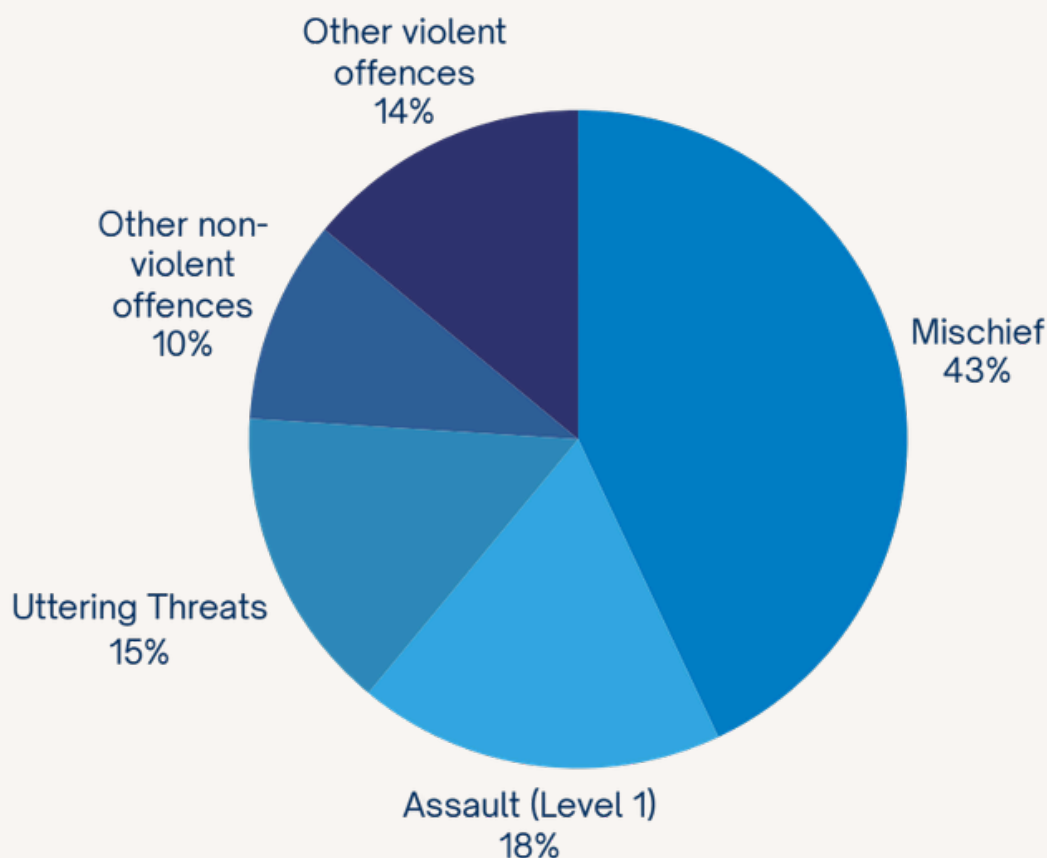
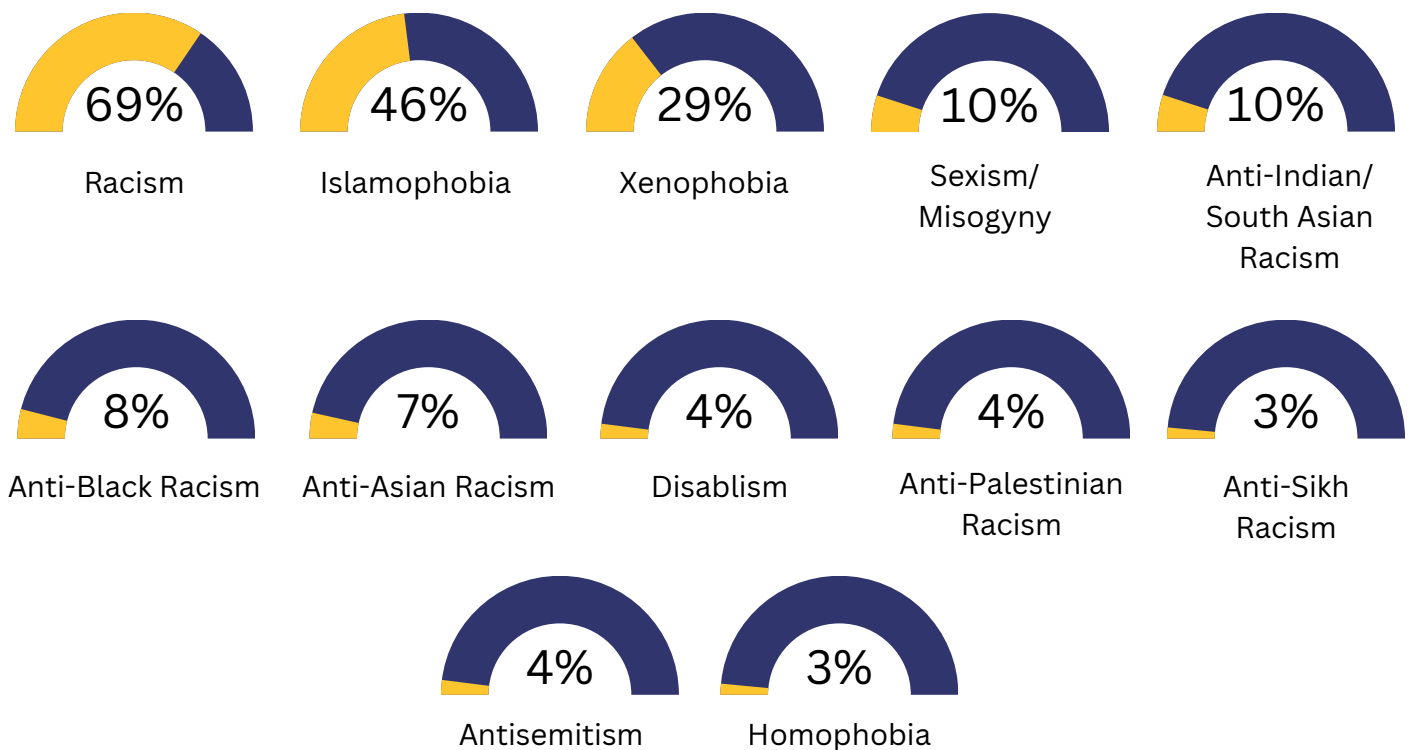


Image courtesy of the memo *Community Safety & Wellbeing: Annual Hate-Motivated Crime Report*

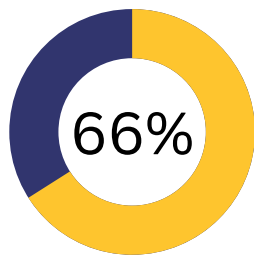
Reason for incident

Those reporting hate were asked for their insights on what they believe was the reason was for the incident. In the 134 cases where victims were female/female-identifying, 69% of reports (92) named racism as a driving reason for their experience. Islamophobia, often seen paired with racism was present in 46% of reports (62). This was followed by xenophobia which was present in 29% of reports (39) and sexism and/or misogyny which was present in 10% of cases (14). More specific instances of racism were also named as reasons with 10% of reports (14) including anti-Indian racism/South Asian racism, 8% of reports (10) including anti-Black racism, 7% of reports (9) including anti-Asian racism, 4% of cases (5) including anti-Palestinian racism and 3% of reports (3) including anti-Sikh racism. Further, disablism was present in 4% of cases (5), antisemitism was present in four cases, homophobia was present in three cases, and bigotry was present in one case. Three cases reported “other” for this question.

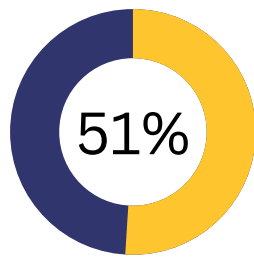




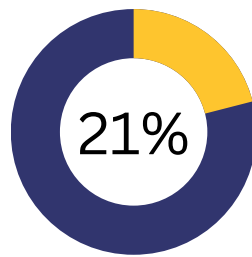
In the 53 cases where victims were youth under the age of 25, 66% of reports (35) named racism as a driving reason for their experience. Islamophobia, much like with female/female-identified reports, was often seen paired with racism and was present in 51% of reports (27). This was followed by xenophobia which was present in 21% of reports (11) and sexism and/or misogyny which was present in 13% of reports (7). More specific instances of racism were also named as reasons including 11% of reports (6) including anti-Asian racism, 6% of reports (3) including anti-black racism, 6% of reports (3) including anti-Palestinian racism, 4% of reports (2) including anti-Indian racism/South Asian racism, 4% of reports (2) including anti-Indigenous racism, and one case including anti-Sikh racism. Antisemitism was named in two cases, homophobia was also named in two cases, and transphobia was named in one case. Eleven cases responded with “other” for this question.



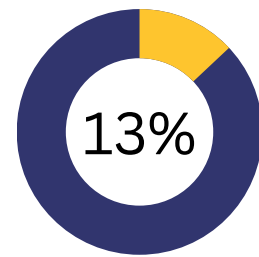
Racism



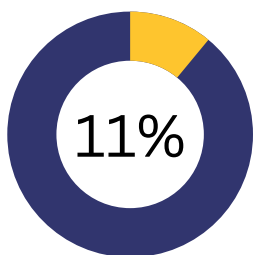
Islamophobia



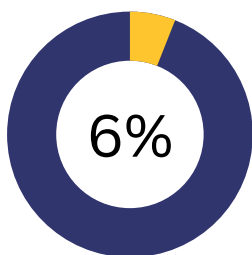
Xenophobia



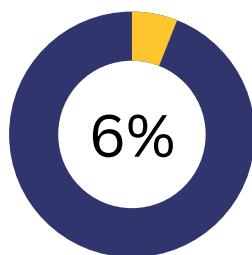
Sexism/Misogyny



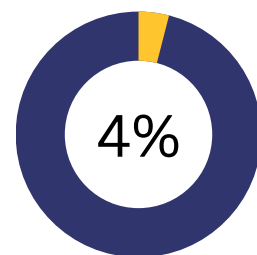
Anti-Asian
Racism



Anti-Black
Racism



Anti-Palestinian
Racism



Anti-Indigenous
Racism

Accounting for all 289 reports, across the AHS reporting line and survey, 67% (193) of reports named racism as a driving reason for their experience. Islamophobia, was present in 36% of reports (105). This was followed by xenophobia which was present in 30% of reports (87) and antisemitism was present in 11% of reports (32). Sexism and/or misogyny was present in 6% of cases (17). More specific instances of racism were also named as reasons including 8% of reports (24) including anti-Asian racism, 7% of reports (22) including anti-Indian racism/South Asian racism, 6% of reports (16) including anti-black racism, 5% of reports (15) including anti-Indigenous racism, 4% of reports (12) including anti-Palestinian racism, and 2% of reports (7) including anti-Sikh racism. Further, transphobia was present in 4% of reports (12), homophobia was present in 4% of reports (11), and disablism was present in 3% of reports (10). One case had bigotry named as a reason and seventeen cases answered “other” to this question.

It is important to understand the intersectionality of hate. Rarely did a report not include multiple, overlapping forms of prejudice. Reports would include overlaps such as racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia, or homophobia, sexism and anti-Black racism. When prejudice overlaps, it combines to create intense compounded experiences of trauma for those experiencing it. While considering the presence of this prejudice, it is also important to consider the compounding nature of the experience for those who experienced the hate.

Consistent with previous years, wearing specific apparel was correlated with experiences of hate. A total of 43 reports (15%) stated explicitly that victims were wearing cultural or religious clothing. Of this total, 24 reports (56%) included someone wearing a hijab. Other items mentioned including crosses, kippa, bindi and jhumke, dupatta, Magen David and turbans. Reports also included the wearing of pride colours and drag.

Data collected from Waterloo Region Police Services

In 2025, there were 128 race-based hate-motivated crimes reported to police, higher than any other category (language, immigrants, religion, gender, sexual orientation). Hate-motivated crimes continue to most often target Black individuals. However, police also saw 28 calls for incidents that targeted South Asian individuals. Notably, 2025 is the first year Statistics Canada has included the Immigrants/Newcomers to Canada category in police reporting, which is now the third most common hate-motivated crime category.

Frequency of Hate-Motivated Crimes on the Basis of Race in 2025

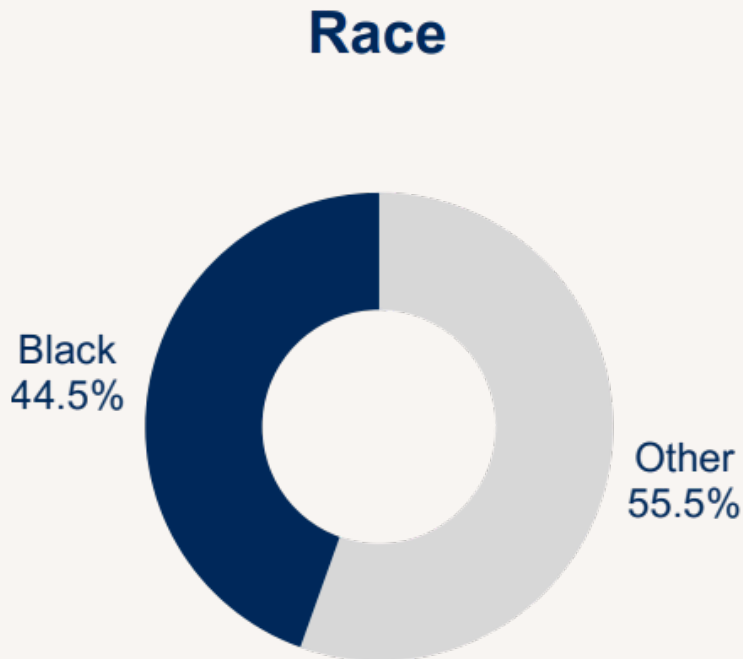


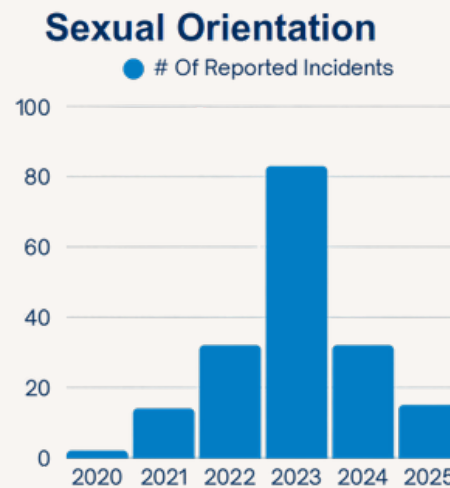
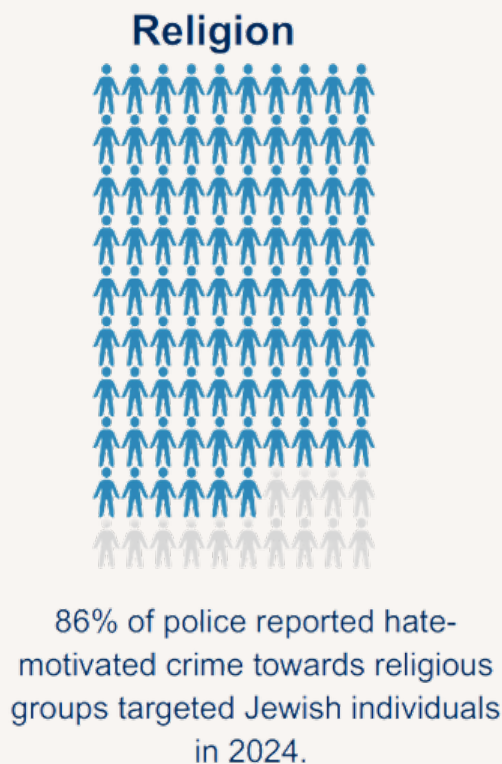
Image courtesy of the memo Community Safety & Wellbeing: Annual Hate-Motivated Crime Report

Data collected from Waterloo Region Police Services

In 2025, the second-most common hate crime type was religion which is consistent with 2024. There were 50 hate-motivated crimes targeting religious groups. The vast majority of police-reported hate-motivated crimes targeting religious groups affected Jewish individuals (total of 43 cases). Hate-motivated crimes targeting Muslim individuals that were reported to police sat at six in 2025.

In addition, in 2025, there were 15 hate-motivated crimes targeting individuals based on their sexual orientation that were reported to police. The vast majority of police-reported hate-motivated crimes targeted the overall 2SLGBTQ+ community and most commonly included the removal of Pride flags.

Frequency of Hate-Motivated Crimes on the Basis of Religion and Sexuality

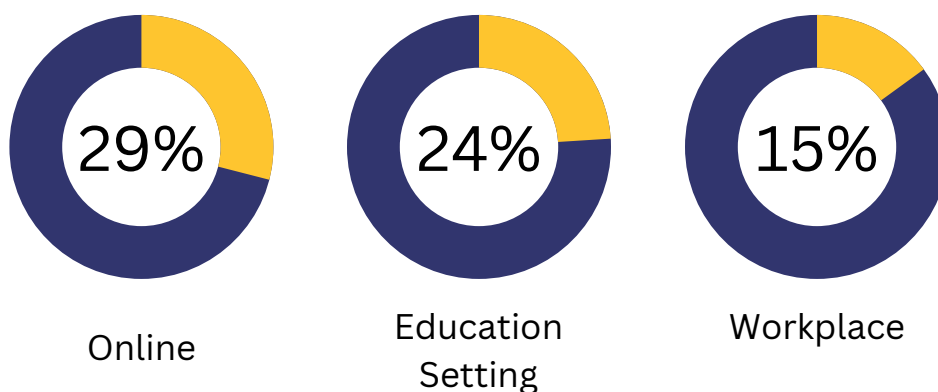


We continue to observe a decrease in police reported hate-motivated crime

Images courtesy of the memo Community Safety & Wellbeing: Annual Hate-Motivated Crime Report

Spaces where reported incidents were experienced

Those reporting hate were asked to disclose more localizing details about the spaces where the incidents occurred. When analyzing this data through a gendered lens, the most prominent reported space for female/female-identified victims of hate was online - accounting for 18 cases (29%). Education spaces, including private and public schools and universities and colleges accounted for 15 cases (24%). Further, workplaces had nine reports (15%), residential or neighbourhood settings had five reports, transit had four reports, and private businesses had three reports.



Looking at the location trends among youth under the age of 25, there is a concentration of experiences of hate in education settings (college/university and public school/private school), online, and public spaces (street, parks, parking lots, government offices, community centres, religious spaces, etc.). Together, these three areas encompass 80% of the reported cases tied directly to youth victims. More specifically, education settings accounted for 16 cases (31%), Online settings accounted for 14 cases (30%), and public spaces accounted for 10 cases (19%).

Across all 289 cases, there were similarities to the 2024 reporting year in terms of frequency in different spaces. The most reported incidents continued to be in online spaces, 118 cases (41%). Public spaces, a grouping of parks, streets, parking lots, government offices, community centres, health spaces and religious spaces, accounted for 58 cases (20%) with 34 of those cases being in parks/streets or parking lots more specifically. A further 37 cases (13%) happened in education settings including colleges and universities as well as private and public schools. Residential and neighbourhood settings, inclusive of rental situations with landlords accounted for 24 cases (8%) and work locations accounted for 22 cases (8%). Also notable is that private businesses were the location for 15 reported cases (5%) and transit accounted for 12 reported cases (4%).

Residential/Neighbourhood Spaces- (13 cases)

Residential and neighbourhood spaces included private residences, neighbourhoods where people were visiting or living and rental situations with landlords. A total of 24 reports happened in residential/neighbourhood spaces, with 67% of these cases including female/female-identified victims. In cases of reported hate in residential/neighbourhood spaces the prevalent behaviours and actions reported included: verbal hate/harassment (16 instances) and online abuse (10 instances). In situations of escalation, there were two instances of publicly sharing hate against a group and/or promoting genocide, three threats of violence and one physical assault.

There is a prominent experience of identity-based targeting based on race and religion with harassment happening in ordinary spaces in neighbourhoods, private residences as well as with landlords and neighbours:

“I have been continuously bullied by my landlady and her children for being old, not having children and living as if I am young. Being followed not to talk to anyone in the neighbourhood, threatened to be kicked out for small household matters, treated as if I am their maid...”

- Reported through AHS

Several strong trends emerged across reports of hate in this setting. Again this year, female/female identified and visibly identifiable minorities remain especially targeted in residential and neighbourhood settings:

“My family has been harassed, my property vandalized and my children and I live in fear.”

- Reported through AHS

Harassment was experienced through a variety of methods. For example, one reported instance shared a situation of verbal harassment where someone yelled at them:

“Get out of my culture, how about that? Get out of my culture.”

- Reported through AHS

Another report shared:

“...We were just standing in our property and she started saying mind your business... I simply said what is your problem why are you taking to her like this. In reply, she said stay inside you guys are ugly and the ugliest race in the world and showed me middle finger.”

- Reported through AHS



These incidents led to people changing their habits and visibility in their neighbourhood in an attempt to create more safety for themselves:

“I don’t know if I wanna walk there anymore.”

- Reported through AHS

“My children were frightened, and I am now hesitant to allow them to play outside.”

- Reported through AHS

“I have stopped coming home at day time and only come at night so there's no escalation.”

- Reported through AHS

In a slight shift, this year we received reports that demonstrated more direct examples of an overlap happening with hate happening online spilling over into residential/neighbourhood settings.

Public Spaces - (60 cases)

A total of 60 incidents happened in public spaces. Public spaces were considered inclusive of parks, streets, parking lots, government offices, hospitals and health care centres, community centres, libraries, and religious properties. A total of 38% (23) of these cases included female/female-identified victims, 17% (10) of cases included youth under the age of 25, and a further 12 cases were groups/communities that were targeted. Among the behaviours and actions reported most frequently included: verbal hate and harassment (37 cases), vandalism (6 cases), publicly displaying or spreading hate (5 cases), displaying or spreading hateful symbols/images/posters or literature (4 cases), and physical assault (4 cases).

Jewish, Palestinian, Muslim, Indigenous, queer, and trans communities are all referenced in polarized hate narratives in public spaces

“Hearing hatred and calling for the death of x and x.”

- Reported through AHS

“ARPA is organizing an anti-trans rally and march.”

- Reported through AHS

“She continued to verbally attack all the teenagers... saying there should be no mosques here.”

- Reported through AHS

Many incidents involve people being told to leave Canada, criticized for accents, or treated as outsiders based on appearance, language, or ethnicity:

“I was walking down the street and I got approached and told to go back to my country.”

- Reported through AHS

Several reports involved threats, physical aggression, assault, dogs being weaponized to intimidate, or people fearing for their safety. And a notable trend is that many incidents involved children witnessing or experiencing hate in the community, including sports and youth programs:

“My kids and I were scared for our lives.”

- Reported through AHS

Another major trend was the visibility of hate propaganda, extremist symbols, and targeted graffiti in public environments:

“Each instance of the graffiti was in black spray paint, large and said ‘Go back to India.’”

- Reported through AHS

“Swastikas drawn onto the building.”

- Reported through AHS



Education Settings - (37 cases)

Education settings included college/university settings as well as public or private school settings (largely in secondary schools). A total of 37 reports happened in education settings, including 12 cases in college/university settings and 25 cases in public or private school settings (largely in secondary schools). Reports came from youth under the age of 25, 43% (16 cases), as well as from adults of varying ages and a total of 81% of cases included female/female-identified victims. Among the cases, 70% of reports in this setting included verbal hate/harassment (26 cases), five cases included physical assault, four cases included publicly spreading hate against a group and/or promoting genocide, two included threats of violence and two included vandalism.

A strong trend across these reports is that discrimination is happening repeatedly within schools, from peers, teachers, and broader school systems. Students describe slurs, mockery, exclusion, threats, and humiliation tied to race, religion, ethnicity, and immigration status.

Many incidents specifically involve hijabs, prayer, Muslim identity, or anti-Muslim stereotypes:

“I was praying during class and two girls were staring and laughing at me.”

- Reported through AHS

“Group of boys going on an anti-South Asian rant and would not stop...”

- Reported through AHS

Several reports show racialized and Muslim students being treated as suspicious, dangerous, or violent without evidence. This appears both interpersonally and institutionally:

“The teacher singled out a group of X Muslim students, including my child.”

- Reported through AHS

“Someone wanted to fight a Black person in my school for no reason.”

- Reported through AHS

Stores and Private Business - (15 cases)

A total of 15 incidents happened in private businesses. Private businesses were characterized by shopping malls, retail shops, cinemas, gyms, restaurants, grocery stores, etc. In this setting, 67% (10) reports included verbal hate/harassment:

“A Walmart employee had some altercation with a Black customer and after a while the employee uses the PA system to call out... Several people heard the slur over the microphone.”

- Reported through AHS

Also present was discrimination and the display of hate symbols. The appearance of extremist symbols, stickers, and openly hateful materials speaks to a normalization of organized hate messaging in everyday community spaces:

“There are many many anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli signs...”

- Reported through AHS

“The store sells flags of hate groups...”

- Reported through AHS

Workplaces - (21 cases)

A total of 21 incidents were documented that happened in workplaces. Youth under the age of 25 accounted for 5 reports and female/female-identified victims represented 16 cases (76%). Verbal hate/harassment was prevalent in workplace reports of hate being present in 86% of the cases (18). Also present were escalating experiences of physical assault (2 cases) and threats of violence (1 case). Workplace discrimination and exclusion were strong trends across reports coming into the areas of hiring, scheduling, customer interaction, and co-worker interactions:

“At work a customer refuses to deal with me because I am Chinese and they don’t like to be served by immigrants.”

- Reported through AHS

“My co-workers treat me differently. I feel it is because I am not white like they are.”

- Reported through AHS

“Sometimes I get looks and remarks at work regarding my looks as a Muslim.”

- Reported through AHS

There continues to be a struggle around unsafe reporting environments and fear of retaliation in workplaces, where there is often a lack of support from management and/or HR or those roles are missing all together:

“The figure is an extremely racist depiction of African peoples. Compared to other figures, this figure is one of the most shocking racist depictions of African peoples. Employees are intimidated to question her as she has a bad temper and has been known to be extremely petty. I do not know where else to turn to without paying money and the company lacks a HR department.”

- Reported through AHS

Public Transit - (12 cases)

A total of 12 reports happened in public transit settings. Youth under the age of 25 accounted for 3 reports and female/female-identified victims represented 8 cases (67%). A total of 58% of reports in this setting included verbal hate/harassment (7 cases), three included threats of violence, one case included physical assault, and one included vandalism. Trends on public transit mirrored many of the experiences documented in public spaces more generally. Particularly reports showed the intersection of racism, ableism, and religious discrimination and how discrimination can overlap across identities, targeting disability, religion, immigration, and race at the same time:

*“On the bus, I moved myself and my walker to make room for an elderly Muslimah wearing a hijab and using a cane and people spent rest of the ride complaining about how Muslims were abusing health resources in Canada, saying that disabled *p words* should stay out of Canada. I was told that I didn't have to move my things to accommodate. I'm disabled myself and told them that disability affects all races.”*

- Reported through AHS

A recurring trend among reports of hate on public transit is people being told they do not belong in Canada or should “go back” to somewhere else. These comments frame immigrants and racialized people as outsiders in everyday public spaces:

“The person was told to go back to where they came back from.”

- Reported through AHS

Bystander intervention was also observed in these reports with one individual working with a transit driver, a local MP, and the police to support a victim:

“I was traveling on the LRT... I saw a youth repeatedly physically assaulting a woman, who appeared to be homeless, leaving her with a bloodied face. I attempted to intervene by calling out to the assailant... and notified the LRT driver via intercom. The driver stopped... [and] he spoke with the victim, and I also offered my support. Following the incident, I contacted MP Mike Morrice, given his advocacy for affordable housing and homelessness support. He advised me to file a police report, which I have since done. Waterloo Region Police Services said that other people had called them regarding it.”

- Reported through AHS

Online Spaces (65 cases)

In 2025, 118 incidents (40% of total cases) that were reported happened in online environments, experienced by people within Waterloo Region and across Canada. This remains consistent with reporting in 2024. Online reports of hate were characterized both by public displays of hate on social media to very direct experiences through private online groups and messaging. Typically, these online instances of hate targeted groups or communities, accounting for 48 cases (41%). A total of 14 cases (12%) targeted youth under the age of 25 and female/female identified people were targeted in 31 cases (26%). Commonly, reported cases included publicly spreading hate against a group and/or publicly inciting genocide or violence against a group, with 31% (37 cases) including this. Also common was verbal hate/harassment which was present in 42% (50) of the reported cases. Online abuse (10 cases) and threats of violence (12 cases) were also experienced or seen.

Islamophobia and anti-immigrant hate are especially widespread in online environments with many reports involving calls for deportation, blaming immigrants, accusations that immigrants do not belong in Canada, anti-Muslim conspiracy rhetoric, or portraying Muslim people as dangerous or inferior:

“This individual is continuously posting in Twitter messages that belittle Muslims and equates them with scary terrorists.”

- Reported through AHS

“On social media... any post pertaining to traffic accidents is assumed to be the fault of immigrants/international students of South Asian descent.”

- Reported through AHS

Many incidents moved beyond general hateful speech into direct harassment campaigns, doxxing, threats, bullying, defamation, AI-generated abuse, and intimidation targeting specific individuals:

“X on Facebook stole my picture and created a malicious AI video of me and others who spoke out against his racist and hateful videos and comments.”

- Reported through AHS

“This women on Tik Tok has a page called X which is dedicated to displaying disturbing barbie doll enactments using people's user names and targeting people online.”

- Reported through AHS

“Canadian Citizen X private messages a local drag queen... to harass, intimidate, and degrade her.”

- Reported through AHS

“X on twitter found my account on tumblr and told me I should kill myself.”

- Reported through AHS

A recurring pattern is frustration that platforms, moderators, police, and institutions are failing to meaningfully intervene. Many people report content repeatedly, only to be ignored, blocked, or retraumatized while hate continues to spread:

“Facebook is doing nothing.”

- Reported through AHS

“Previous complaints have reportedly led to the complainants being removed from the group instead of the individuals making hateful comments.”

- Reported through AHS

“I have reported these blatant antisemitic posts and comments but have never had even one comment or post removed.”

- Reported through AHS

“I feel this plea will be flat out ignored.”

- Reported through AHS





SECTION 5

Next Steps

NEXT STEPS

As Anti-Hate Services moves forward, one of the clearest priorities is securing stable, ongoing funding that allows the program to respond consistently and sustainably to community need. The six-month funding pause in 2025 demonstrated how quickly trust, outreach capacity, and access to support can be disrupted when community-based programs are forced into uncertainty. Reporting hate already comes with significant barriers rooted in fear, stigma, retraumatization, and mistrust of systems. When support structures become unstable, those barriers only deepen. In 2026, rebuilding and strengthening community trust will be central to AHS activities.

At the same time, the growing complexity and intersectionality of reported experiences continues to reinforce the importance of partnerships. Experiences of hate rarely happen in isolation and often overlap across peoples diverse identities. Continued collaboration with schools, housing providers, mental health organizations, legal supports, grassroots groups, and community leaders will remain essential in ensuring responses are holistic, culturally grounded, and accessible to the diverse communities impacted by hate.

The continued growth of reports from outside Waterloo Region, alongside increasing interest from organizations and communities across Canada looking to implement similar models, signals that the need for trusted, community-led hate reporting systems extends far beyond one region. As AHS looks ahead, there is an opportunity to explore broader expansion, knowledge sharing, and replication of the model in ways that can support more communities provincially and nationally.

Even as the program evolves, Waterloo Region remains home. Whether hate happens online, in neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces, or public spaces, community members who come forward must continue to receive meaningful, trauma-informed support grounded in care, dignity, and accountability.

REPORT HATE & DISCRIMINATION

Report Hate or Discrimination

Have you faced or seen racism or Islamophobia?

We can help.

@report@centreformutualwellbeing.ca

519-722-2449

reportinghate.ca

- Report for yourself
- Report for someone else
- Report as a witness
- Report anonymously/privately
- Report in languages other than English

We can help you fight racism & Islamophobia

- Connect you with the right service providers, such as Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, housing, school, healthcare, police, etc.



- Join you for your case meetings
- Help you file complaints and write letters

- Provide culturally sensitive counselling
- Help with neighbourhood conflicts/problems related to racism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia