

THIRD ANNUAL

SNAPSHOT OF HATE IN WATERLOO REGION



WAYS TO REPORT HATE

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Coalition of
Muslim Women
Kitchener-Waterloo

A REVIEW OF
2023

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ABOUT COALITION OF MUSLIM WOMEN OF KW

Founded by a handful of Muslim women from diverse backgrounds in 2010, Coalition of Muslim Women of KW (CMW) is a charitable organization empowering women and girls to be leaders and change makers. CMW provides opportunities for personal and professional growth, and leadership and skills development for women while addressing issues of gender-based violence, racism, discrimination and Islamophobia through innovative programming and services, partnerships and collaboration, and advocacy and outreach.

PROJECT FUNDERS



Region of Waterloo



Canadian
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Tutorial on How To Report



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Service funder



Region of Waterloo

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

“I am very proud of my Palestinian background and I am also very active in my school community, and most of the time those two things cannot simultaneously exist.”

- Reported through AHS

Global waves, local ripples. A fitting description that encapsulated 2023 in Waterloo Region. This year, a total of 115 cases of hate/discrimination were reported through the Coalition of Muslim Women of KW's (CMW) Anti-Hate Services (AHS), with a drastic increase happening post October 7th, 2023. This year saw many incidents of hate that directly tie to the global war and violence between Israel and Gaza, and Muslim, Arab and Palestinian members of our community being targeted directly in escalated ways as a result. Locally, the overwhelming presence of Islamophobia, racism, anti-Palestine discrimination and hate and antisemitism reminds us again this year that intervening around hate through advocacy, being good bystanders and community reporting, are crucial commitments we must make to create safety in our community. Even more so when we acknowledge how global human rights crisis escalate the threat of hate that is pointed towards our neighbours and friends across Waterloo Region.

This report is part of our local way of commemorating the anniversary of the horrific June 6th, 2021 Islamophobic attack in London, Ontario. Its intention is to raise awareness and to act as a way to channel the pain caused by these experiences. It also acts as a strategy to counter Islamophobia, racism and xenophobia in Waterloo Region. On the first-year

anniversary of this attack, Coalition of Muslim Women of KW (CMW) published their first 'Snapshot of Hate in Waterloo Region' report that provided the community with an intentional and conclusive report on hate of this nature, and set the foundation for creating a strategy to counter hate in our community. This report is now in its third year and

continues to bring important experiences and stories to light and inspire community change.

“I’m glad we have this service available in our Region to report.
Thanks, from the Arab community”

- Reported through AHS

By making this report annual, CMW aims to keep this conversation at the front of community change efforts and to continue to remember and honour the lives lost to and impacted by hate, locally and nationally. Bringing this critical information to the community helps those experiencing hate in their efforts to seek support and to see themselves reflected in advocacy, education and prevention/change efforts in Waterloo Region. However, disclosing experiences of hate is not easy and riddled with many barriers, whether it be personal or systemic. Indications of these barriers and hesitancy are reflected throughout this report:

“It was very easy and straightforward. I made a report here because I don't trust that the police will keep the record...”

- Reported through AHS

Because we know that we don’t know the whole picture of how hate and discrimination manifests for individuals in Waterloo Region, it’s important to examine each report of hate documented, but to also be mindful that they are only a part of the full picture. The statistics in this report, brought from the obscure to the light, are extraordinary and important. They exemplify CMW’s work to be a safe point of contact and trusted support:

“ —

“I would like to thank Coalition of Muslim Women for their hate and discrimination services so people like me can benefit from it.”

- Reported through AHS

This report pays extra attention to the experience of youth under the age of 24 and females/female-identified people. We know through documented experiences that females and youth bear the brunt of the blowback of international events. It is important we learn from their experiences and take action as a community to ensure their safety.



Disclosing experiences of hate is not easy and riddled with many barriers, whether it be personal or systemic.

While reading this report, it's important to consider the voices that didn't come forward to formally report their experience this past year and to consider this report the beginning of an important conversation, not a reflection of the whole story.



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 even on behalf of someone else. Those who report are also able to ask for help, at which time CMW will reach out to discuss their situation further and work to fill 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. Its success provided a framework to other organizations and municipalities across Ontario to join together to develop and take ownership over similar initiatives.

The AHS Program was very active this past year, participating in a variety of prevention and community engagement activities. These activities engaged over 2558 community members through 92 distinct outreach activities (including bridge-building meetings, visits, sessions, presentations, booths, and through being speakers/ panelists at community events) as well as twenty-three AHS presentations, workshops and education sessions.

92

Distinct outreach
activities

2558

Community
members engaged.

23

AHS Presentations



“The Anti-Hate Service session made a significant impact. It not only provided us with knowledge about identifying hate incidents but also offered guidance on cultivating a culture of acceptance.

After the training, they reported two to three cases to me to underscore the importance and effectiveness of this vital initiative.”

- AHS partner

In addition to its community education and engagement activities, the program documented 136 cases of hate (with duplicated experiences eliminated, 115 were captured in this report). A total of 43 cases requested further support at the time of reporting, of which 34 progressed into receiving pointed and/or ongoing support. This support included both immediate activities like community referrals or resources as well as longer-term case support. It also included advocacy and system navigation that often weaved in entities like the school board, law enforcement, or legal supports. AHS supported victims through the following services:



Mental health supports/ counselling

Connected 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 individual and systems change for students and families who have faced race-based or cultural-based bullying/harassment/discrimination. Training and workshops as well as bridge building and education were some of the techniques used to support students and families. In addition, connecting with the school/school board as well as with post-secondary education was incredibly important this year as many cases reflected conflict with school administration that were the result of and/or led to experiences of hate. Further opportunities to do community engagement and prevention work also happened through participation in events 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.

As with last year, people accessing CMW's various AHS supports continued to show their gratitude for the exceptional support they received. Among the high praise given was a sincere appreciation for being able to have access to reporting and coordinated support:

“I wanted to thank you for all the great support and advice you gave me. I really wish I had contacted you earlier. The services you provide in your organization, are so valuable for people like me, Insha Allah you be healthy and continue working like this for a long time.”

- Recipient of support from AHS

“Thank you so much for listening to me and providing help to me in my most difficult times. I am glad CMW is providing these services.”

- Recipient of support from AHS

More generally, just the opportunity to participate in community-based reporting was appreciated by those receiving support:

“I appreciate this site being available.”

- Recipient of support from AHS

“I appreciate your work and I am happy that you are providing this service. I hope we can make a difference.”

- Recipient of support from AHS



SECTION 3

DATA COLLECTION



DATA COLLECTION

The primary data that informs this report was received through the AHS program. Specifically, data was collected through anonymous and supported reporting of hate incidents. This service provides an opportunity for reporting hate online, in person, over the phone, through the use of WhatsApp, over email and by CMW staff directly and through their community connections. Cases analyzed for this report happened between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023.

All data collected through AHS 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 have been removed to protect the anonymity and ensure the safety of those who shared their experiences.

A secondary source of data informing this report was received from Waterloo Region Police Services (WRPS) and various community partners who submitted their observations from 2023.

Data sources for the 2023 Snapshot of Hate in Waterloo Region Report:



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada





SECTION 4

DATA TRENDS



TRENDS IN REPORTING

Overview



In 2023, a total of 115 cases were collected through AHS. This marks a 26% increase in cases over the previous year. In the first half of the year (January 1–June 30), 41 cases were reported. In the latter half of the year (July 1–December 31), there was 74 cases reported, further 46% of the total cases for the year were reported between October and December 2023.

A total of 57 reports were submitted anonymously through the reporting hate website, a further 58 reports were submitted through contact with CMW staff. This marks a 14% increase in online reporting over the 2022 reporting year. Looking at the details of these reports, 39% were made by CMW staff with permission from the victim(s), witnesses/bystander or community partners, 24% of reports were made by victims themselves, 19% of reports were made on behalf of someone, 9% of reports were made by bystanders/witnesses, and 9% of reports were made from a member of the affected community. When it came to reports concerning youth in education settings, 66% of cases were supported in reporting by CMW staff directly through their community connections.

While increases were seen in the volume of reporting over the full 2023 year and particularly in the latter half of the year, there were also themes in the escalation of the classifications of hate, particularly those experienced among female/ female-identified victims. Between October– December 2023, 53% of cases were classified as hate incidents (up from 31% in the first half of the year) and only 21% of cases were classified as being discrimination (down from 41% in the first half of the year).

Key populations reflected in this report include female/female-identified and youth victims under the age of 24. A total of 74 cases (64%) had victims who were female/female-identified, and further 38 cases (41%) included victims who were youth under the age of 24, of which 71% were female/female-identified.

74

Total reports with victims
who were female/
female-identified

115

Total reports for
2023

38

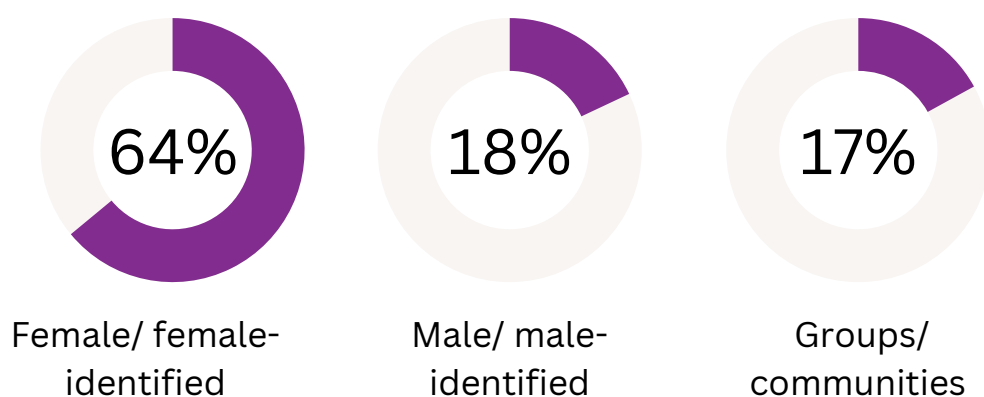
Total reports with
victims who were youth
under the age of 24



Demographics

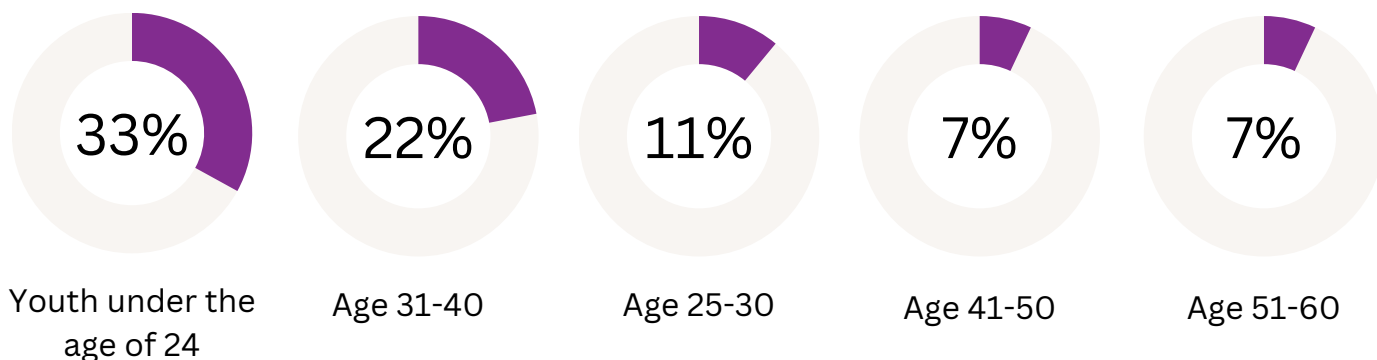
Gender

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, 74 cases (64%) included a female or female-identified victim, 21 cases (18%) included a male/ male-identified victim, 20 cases (17%) included groups/communities being targeted where gender did not apply, and one case preferred not to say.



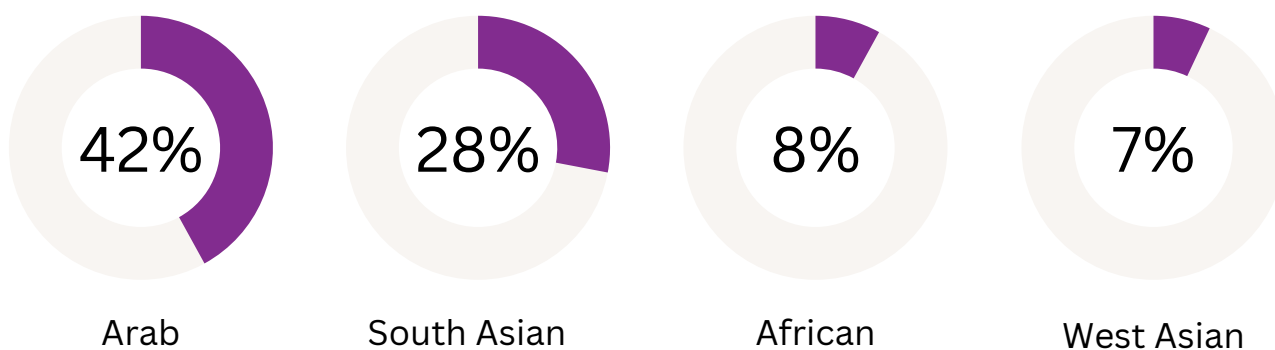
Age

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 youth under the age of 24, accounting for 38 cases (33%). The next most prominent age group represented was ages 31-40 with 25 cases (22%). A total of 13 cases (11%) included victims between the ages of 25-30, eight cases (7%) included victims between the ages of 41-50, seven cases (6%) included victims between the ages of 51-60, one case included a victim age 60+ and 22 cases (19%) 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 74 cases that included female/ female-identified victims, 31 were Arab, 21 were South Asian, six were African, five were South-East Asian, four were West Asian, one was black, one was white and three preferred not to say.



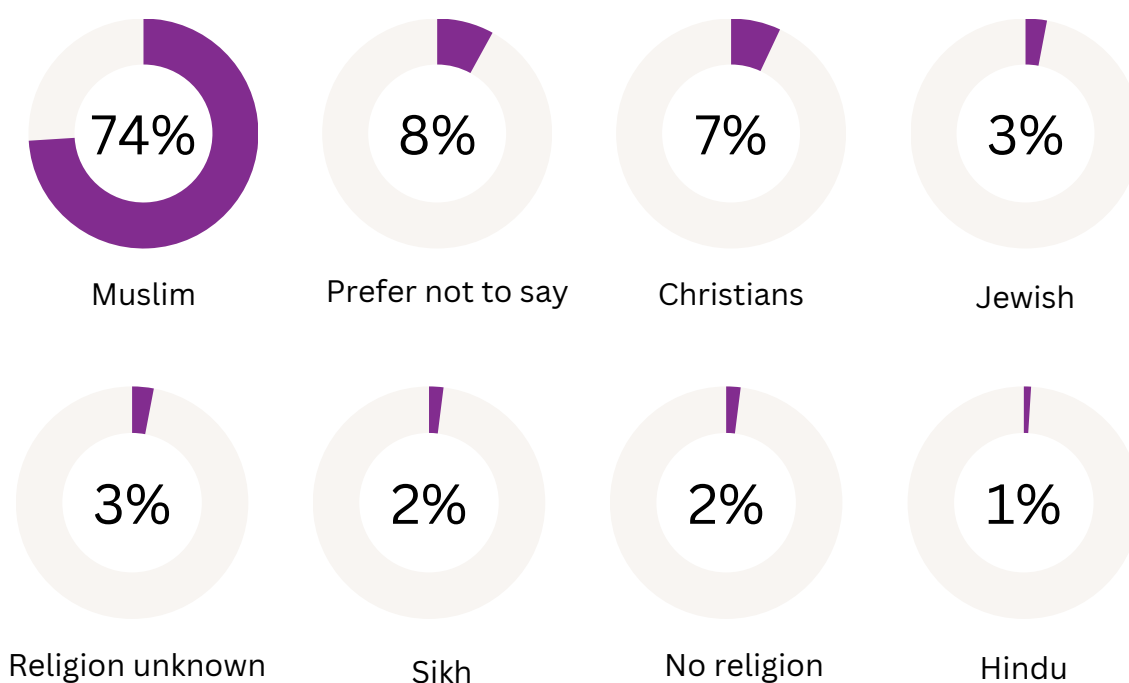
Of the 38 cases that included victims that were youth under the age of 24, 20 (53%) were Arab, seven (18%) were South Asian, three (8%) were West Asian, two (5%) were African, two (5%) were East or South-East Asian, one did not apply, and three were unknown/ prefer not to say.

When looking at the race/ethnicity of victims across all of the cases, 47 (41%) were Arab, 26 (22%) were South Asian, eight were African, seven were West Asian, five were East or South-East Asian, five were White, three were Black, one was Central American, in seven cases race/ethnicity did not apply, and lastly six cases were unknown/prefer not to say.

A total of 74 reports of hate (64%) happened in the last half of 2023 (July-December). Of those cases, 58% of victims were Arab and 18% were South Asian.

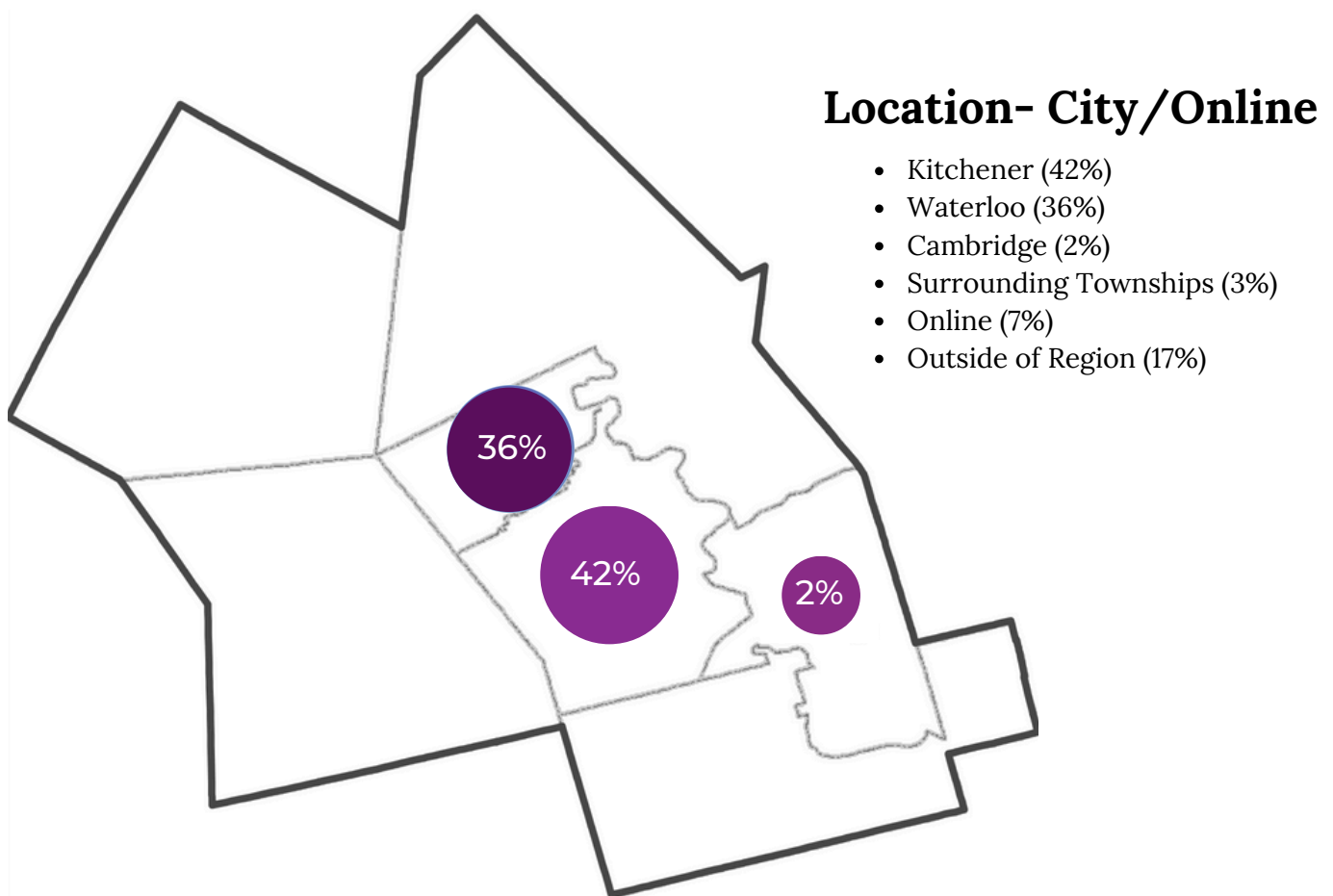
Religion of Victim

Those reporting hate were asked the religion of the victim. Of the total reports, 85 (74%) victims were identified as Muslim, nine (8%) responded as prefer not to say/doesn't apply, eight (7%) identified as Christian and in three cases (3%) religion was unknown. A further three cases (3%) included victims who are Jewish, two cases (2%) stated no religion, two cases (2%) were Sikh, and one was Hindu.



Geographic location of reported incidents

A total of 96 cases happened in spaces/places within the geographic boundaries of Waterloo Region, making up 83% of total cases. A further 19 cases (17%) were from outside of Waterloo Region, specifically 13 cases happened in the Greater Toronto Area. Waterloo Region's urban centres were more likely to be locations of reported hate or discrimination, Kitchener accounting for 49 cases (42%), Waterloo accounting for 42 cases (36%). Further, Cambridge accounted for two cases (2%), and the townships accounted for three cases (3%). Lastly, 16 cases (7%) were experienced in an online space by people living in the forementioned geographic communities.



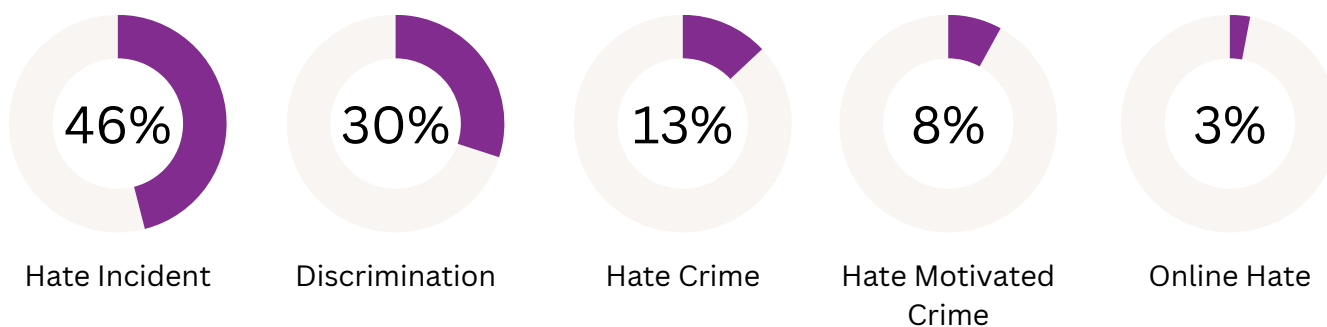


Types of hate experienced

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 74 cases that included female/ female-identified victims, 34 cases (46%) were classified as hate incidents, 22 cases (30%) were classified as discrimination, 10 cases (13%) were classified as hate crimes, six cases (8%) were classified as hate motivated crimes, and two cases (3%) were classified as online hate.



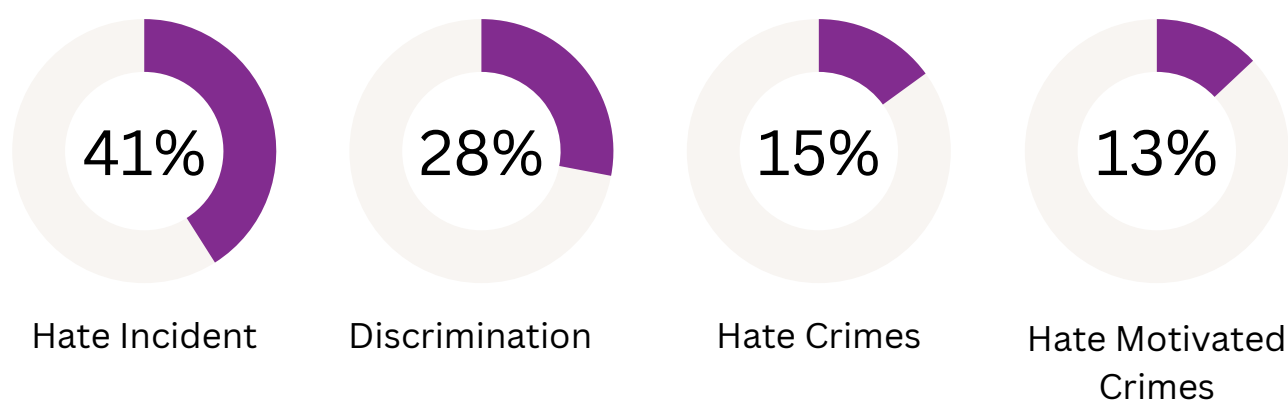
Signs of escalation in classification happened among experiences where victims were female/female-identified in the last quarter of 2023 (October- December), where 53% of cases were classified as hate incidents (up from 31% in the first half of the year) and only 21% of cases were classified as being discrimination (down from 41% in the first half of the year).

The acts that characterized cases that included female/female-identified victims were most often verbal hate/ harassment (28 cases/ 55%) and discrimination (21 cases/ 28%). Further, publicly spreading hate against a group was present in seven cases, bullying/intimidation was present in six cases, physical assault was present in six cases, and threats of violence were found in three cases.

Of the 38 cases that included youth under the age of 24 as victims, 15 cases (39%) were classified as discrimination and 12 cases (34%) were classified as hate incidents, six cases (16%) were classified as a hate motivated crimes, three cases (8%) were classified as hate crimes, and one case (3%) were classified as online hate. Much like the case with female/female-identified victims, there

was an escalation in reporting in the last part of the year that was matched with seeing more classifications of hate incidents and hate motivated crimes. The acts that characterized these cases were most often discrimination (39%) and verbal hate/ harassment (32%). In addition, three cases included threats of violence and three included physical assault.

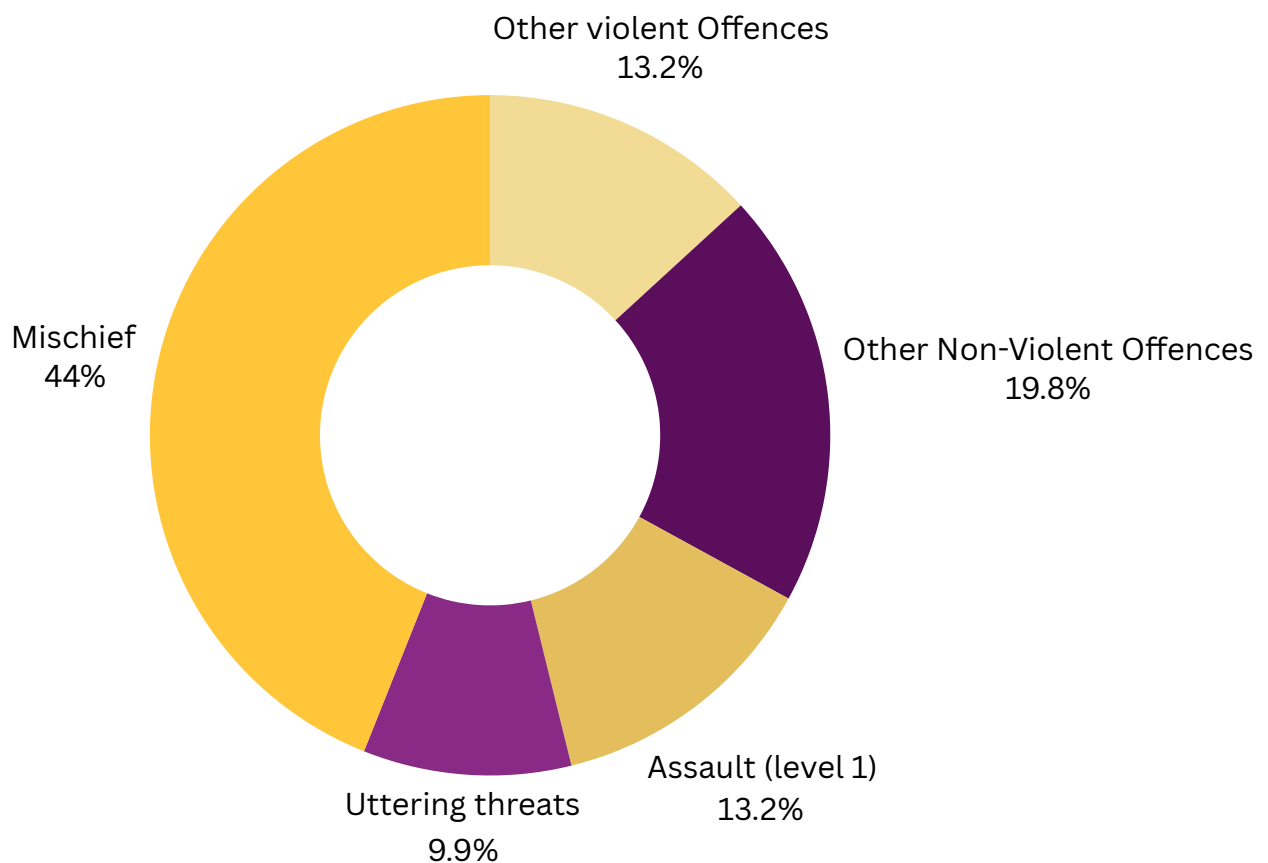
When considering the whole picture of all 115 reports, 47 cases (41%) were classified as hate incidents, 32 cases (28%) were classified as discrimination, 17 cases (15%) were classified as hate crimes, 15 cases (13%) were classified as hate motivated crimes, three cases (3%) were classified as online hate and one report was classified as “other”. Like seen in the data from female/female-identified victims and youth under the age of 24, there was an escalation in reporting with 41 cases happening in the first half of 2023 and 74 cases happening in the second half. The percentage of cases that were classified as hate crimes escalated 14% in the second half of the year and hate incidents escalated 11%.



The acts that characterized cases overall were most often verbal hate/ harassment (38 cases / 33%), discrimination (28 cases/ 24%) and publicly spreading hate against a group (14 cases/ 12%). Further, physical assault was present in seven cases, bullying/intimidation was present in eight cases, threats of violence was present in six cases, online abuse was present in six cases, vandalism was present in four cases, and displaying or spreading hateful symbols/ images/ posters/ literature was present in two cases.

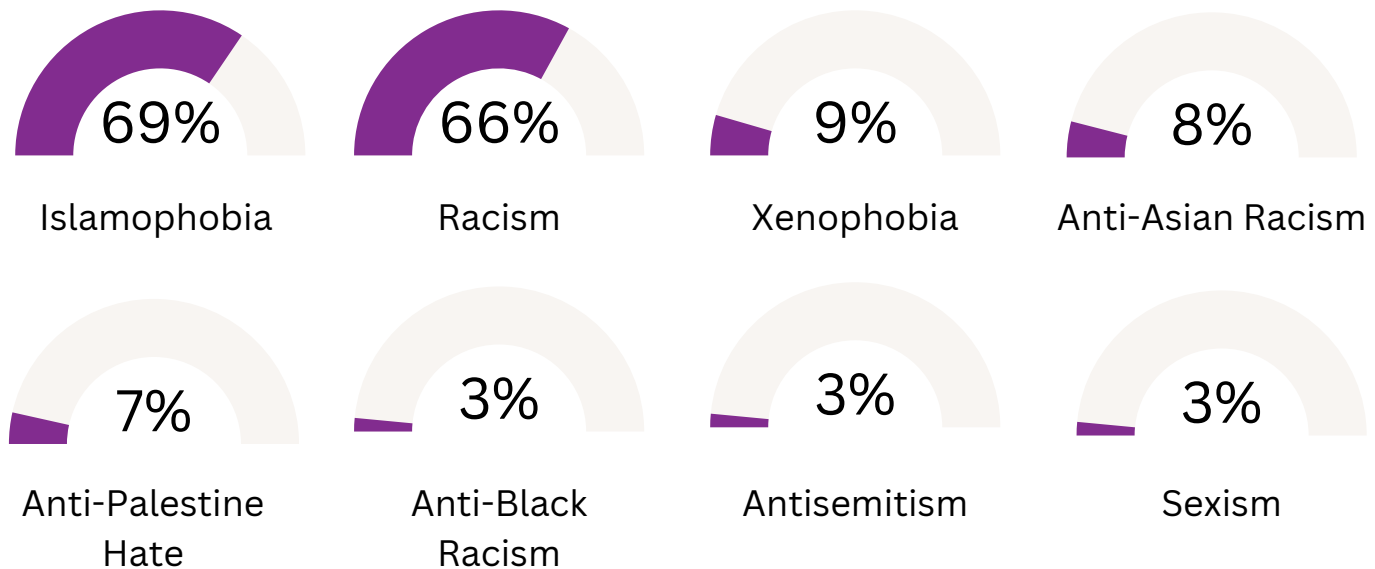
Data collected from Waterloo Region Police Services

According to a memo titled 'Community Safety & Wellbeing Combating Hate' authored by the WRPS Community Safety Partnerships, there were 369 hate-motivated crimes in 2023 across Waterloo Region, an increase of 94%. Of those, the majority were non-violent (58%) and further 40% were Mischief calls for things such as offensive graffiti. The next most common incident was level 1 assaults with 44 calls.



Reason for incident

Those reporting hate were asked their insights on what the reason was for the incident. In the 74 cases where victims were female/ female-identifying, 51 cases (69%) included Islamophobia as a reason for the incident, 49 cases (66%) included racism as a reason, further seven cases included anti-immigrant hate (Xenophobia), six cases included anti-Asian racism, five cases were anti-Palestine hate, two included anti-black racism, two included antisemitism, two included sexism and one included homophobia.

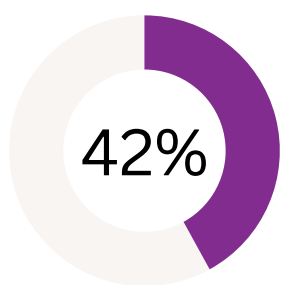


When considering female/ female-identified victims and intersectionality, a total of 41 cases (55%) selected multiple reasons for the incident. A total of 31 cases (42%) included two reasons, in combinations such as: 'Anti-immigrant hate (xenophobia) and anti-Asian racism', 'Islamophobia and anti-Palestine', hate and anti-immigrant hate', and 'racism and Islamophobia'. Further, another 10 cases included three reasons, in combinations such as: 'Racism, Islamophobia and anti-immigrant hate (xenophobia)', and 'racism, Islamophobia and anti-Palestine hate'.

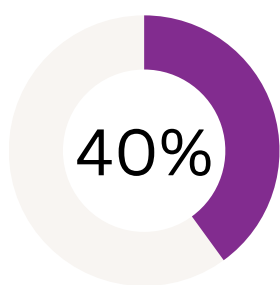


In the 38 cases where victims were identified as being youth under the age of 24, 27 cases (71%) included Islamophobia as a reason for the incident, 20 cases (52%) included racism as a reason, further five cases were anti-Palestine, three cases were anti-Asian racism, and there was one case each for anti-Arab hate, homophobia and anti-immigrant hate.

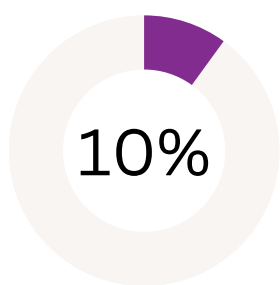
When considering the whole picture of all 115 reports, 48 cases (42%) gave racism as a reason for the incident, 46 cases (40%) gave Islamophobia as a reason, 12 cases (10%) gave anti-Palestine hate as a reason, seven cases (6%) gave anti-immigrant hate (xenophobia) as a reason, six cases (5%) gave anti-Asian racism as a reason and three cases (3%) gave antisemitism as a reason. Two cases each named sexism and anti-Arab as reasons for the incident and one case each named homophobia and anti-black racism as a reason.



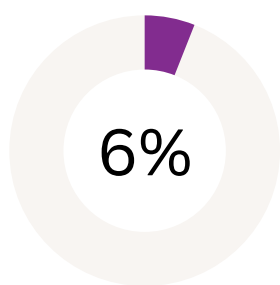
Racism



Islamophobia



Anti-Palestine Hate



Xenophobia

During an analysis of the data, a trend tying religious or culture specific clothing directly to the victims' experience of hate emerged. Often this clothing was mentioned directly in verbal hate/harassment cases. Of the 115 victims, 55 (48%) were wearing a hijab or niqab and in seven cases victims were wearing the keffiyeh. One person who reported shared:

“My friend and I (both residents of Waterloo) were walking in the street in Toronto. She was wearing a Palestinian keffiyeh (which she has worn everywhere for years), when this white man walking by shoved her in the shoulder quite hard (did not seem accidental). This seemed like anti-Palestinian racism and hate which is rampant in the current political climate.”

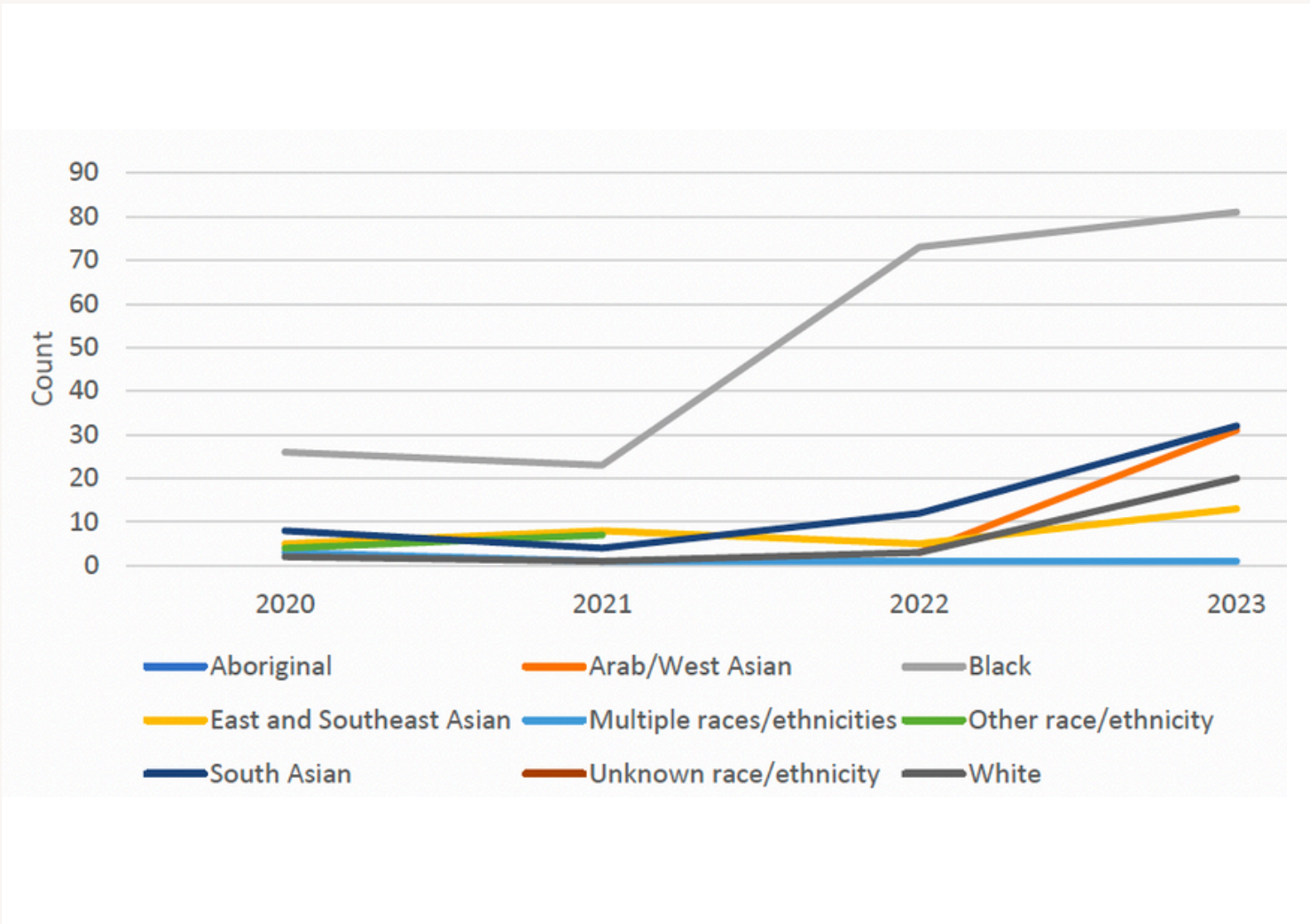
- Reported through AHS



Data collected from Waterloo Region Police Services

In 2023 in Waterloo Region there were 190 race based hate-motivated crimes. Hate-motivated crimes most often targeted Black individuals, however, there was a spike in hate-motivated crimes towards South Asian individuals. In the figure below, “other race/ethnicity” refers to incidents targeting specific nationalities, while “Unknown race/ethnicity” refers to incidents where hate-motivated crimes may have targeted a variety of race-groups (e.g., “White power” graffiti).

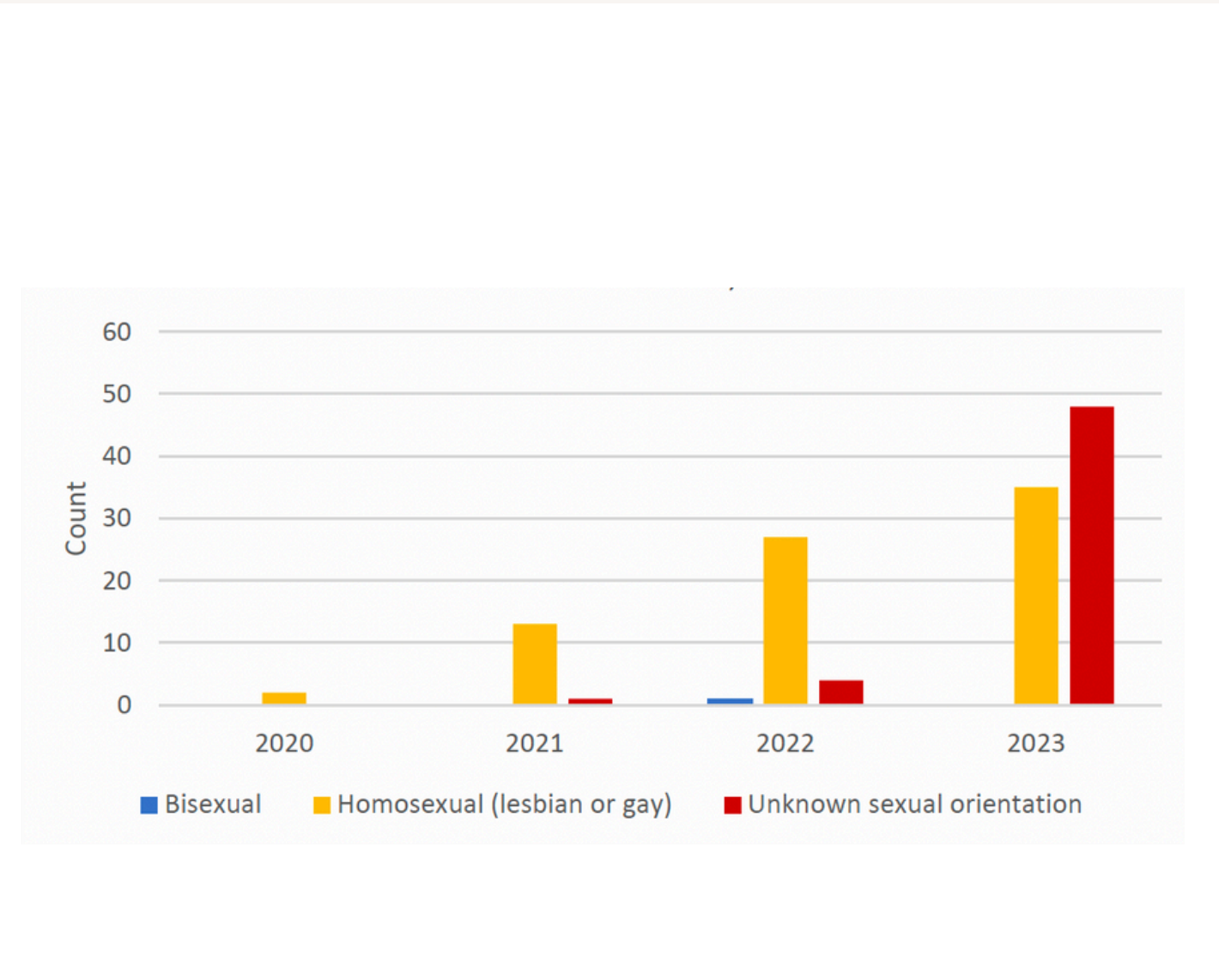
Frequency of Hate-Motivated Crimes on the Basis of Race 2020-2023



Data collected from Waterloo Region Police Services continued...

In 2023, there were 83 hate-motivated crimes targeting individuals based on their sexual orientation. The vast majority of police-reported hate-motivated crimes targeted ‘Unknown sexual orientation’, a label given by police to describe hate-motivated crimes targeting the 2SLGBTQ+ community generally.

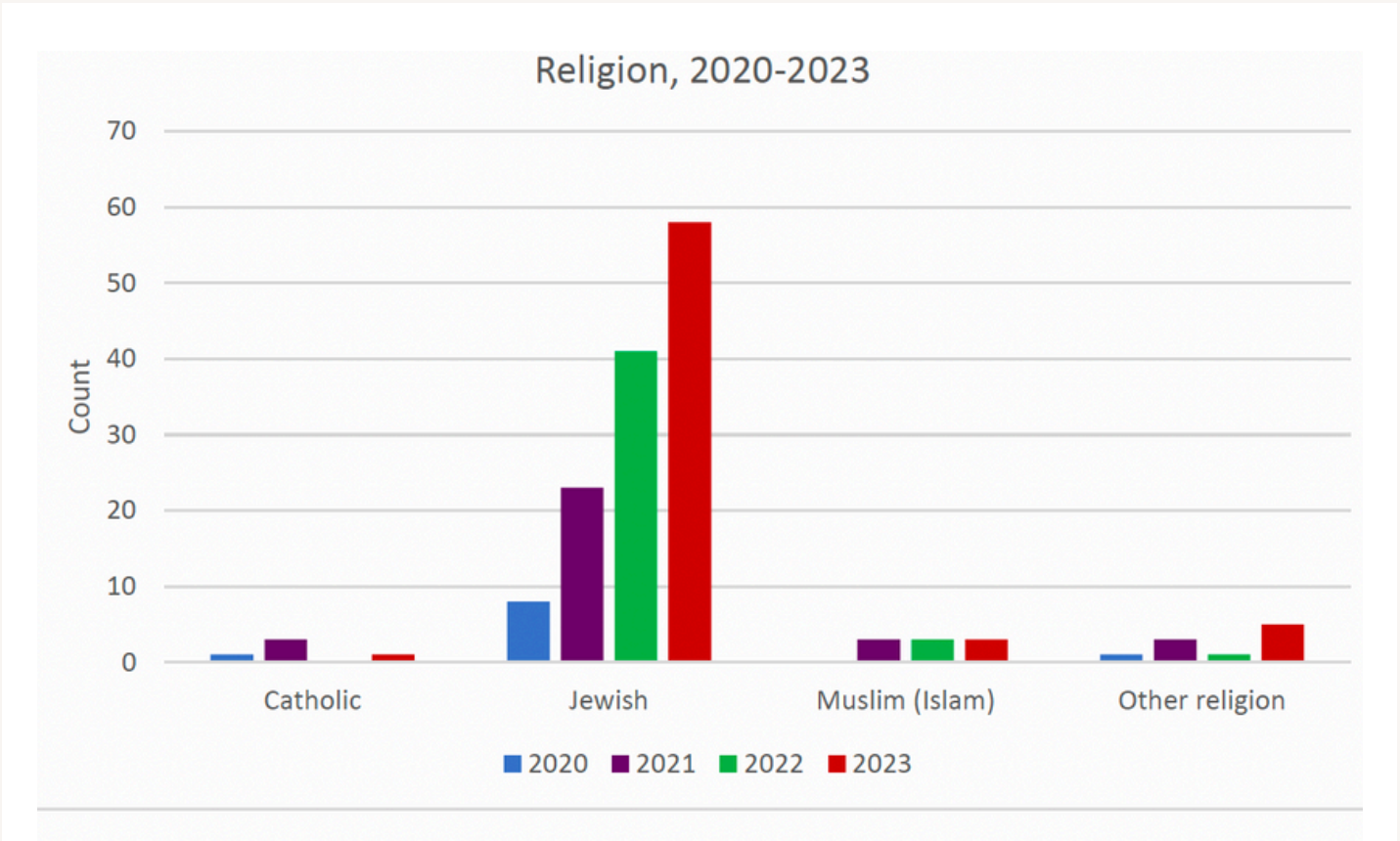
Frequency of Hate-Motivated Crimes on the Basis of Sexual Orientation 2020-2023



Data collected from Waterloo Region Police Services

In 2023, there were 67 hate-motivated crimes targeting religious groups. The vast majority of police-reported hate motivated crimes targeting religious groups affected Jewish individuals, specifically 87% of cases (total of 58 case).

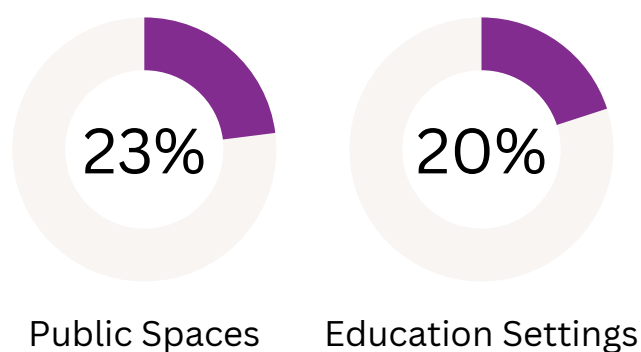
Frequency of Hate-Motivated Crimes on the Basis of Religion 2020-2023



CMW participated in conversations with members of the Jewish community regarding this report. It was felt that the data collected by WRPS accurately reflects the experience as shared among those in the Jewish community. The ongoing rise in targeted acts towards Jewish people and the Jewish community is indicative of the need to continue to build safety throughout Waterloo Region.

Spaces where reported incidents were experienced

Those reporting hate were asked to disclose more localizing details about the community space where the incident of hate/discrimination happened (both online and in-person). When analyzing this data through the lens of gendered Islamophobia the most prominent reported space for female/female-identified victims of hate was public spaces such as the park, street or parking lot, accounting for 17 cases (23%). Further, education settings (college/university and public school/private school) accounted for 15 cases (20%).



Looking at the location trends among youth under the age of 24, education settings (college/university and public school/private school) accounted for 21 cases (55%) and further public transit accounted for five cases (13%).

Across all 115 cases, the most reported incidents happened in public spaces, 30 cases (26%). A further 26 cases (23%) happened in education settings. Online spaces accounted for 16 cases (14%) and housing/neighbourhood spaces accounted for 11 cases (10%). Similarly, stores and private business accounted for 11 cases (10%). Workplaces accounted for eight cases (7%) and health care settings accounted for four cases (3%). Government offices accounted for three cases (3%) and the remaining four cases were split between religious property (one case), community centres (one case) and other/prefer not to say (two cases).

Public Spaces- (30 cases)

A total of 25 incidents happened in public spaces like parking lots, parks, and on the street. Of those incidents, 17 cases (68%) included victims that were female/female-identified. A further five incidents happened on public transit. In this setting, it was most common for hate incidents to be reported (12 cases), followed by hate motivated crimes (nine cases), hate crimes (seven cases) and discrimination (two cases).

A number of behaviours characterized experiences of hate reported in public spaces/settings, including: physical assault, threats of violence, vandalism, discrimination, verbal hate/harassment, publicly spreading hate against a group and bullying/intimidation. Among the most common experiences were verbal hate/harassment, threats of violence and physical assault. Instances of verbal hate/harassment were particularly common in public spaces and were also often tied to religious and cultural wear, including the hijab, niqab, kaffiyeh and other visual markers such as the Palestinian flag:

“My husband, and my children and I were walking back to our car after a pro Palestine protest and we had Palestine flags. There was a lady across the street who verbally attacked us and said some profanity. All because she could see the flag.”

- Reported through AHS

“In a car rally from Fairview to Conestoga Mall, A lady told me while coming out from the Zehrs store, ‘Don't bring war to our country’. I was wearing kaffiyeh.”

- Reported through AHS

“A women came out running from her home and started yelling at me and said this is Canada take off your niqab.”

- Reported through AHS

Physical assault was also the most likely to be reported as happening in public settings. One participant shared their experience:

“I was threatened while waiting by the bus stop and spit on.”

- Reported through AHS

Education Settings- (26 cases)

A total of 19 incidents happened in public school/private school spaces, with another seven incidents happening at college/universities. A total of 24 cases (92%) included youth under the age of 24 with another two cases (8%) that were groups or communities targeted so age wasn't recorded. In this setting, it was most common for discrimination to be reported, 12 cases (46%). A total of eight cases (31%) were classified as hate-incidents, two cases were hate crimes (8%), two cases were hate-motivated crimes (8%) and two cases were online hate (8%). Among the behaviours and actions reported included: Verbal hate/harassment, images/posters/literature, bullying/intimidation, discrimination, threats of violence, online abuse and publicly spreading hate against a group.

CMW staff reported that the final quarter of 2023 showed a trend where there was a heightened emphasis on advocating to school boards on behalf of students, particularly regarding navigating the educational system alongside addressing instances of anti-Palestine discrimination and hate. Through these relationships, CMW were able to include cases made to the school board by students in the AHS reporting system.

Administration, teachers and professors remained of central focus in cases centered around education settings. Those reporting hate shared some of their struggles:

“...Every attempt to raise awareness for how Palestinians are being affected is still very controlled, many people have to watch the language and terms they use in case the term 'antisemitic' is used against them when it doesn't actually apply. There was a vigil held, after a lot of discussion for the renowned scholar with ties to the University who was killed with his family in Gaza, eventually. Having more support and statements, as well as action, come from the University itself would be very helpful, rather than having the objections I've heard about so far.”

- Reported through AHS

“During my grade 10 history class as we were ending the unit about World War Two and the Holocaust. My History teacher makes a comment along the lines of, ‘ Jews fled to a land with no people’. As a Palestinian I was shocked by that statement as this’ land with no people’ was my homeland Palestine and my grandfather's home and family lived there for generations, my parents were forced to be refugees during that time. “

- Reported through AHS

Administration concerns also included feelings from students of being censored:

“We expressed that criticizing a government does not mean criticizing a community, that this school, its clubs, and students, have criticized many governments without being sent down to the office or being sent home. No matter what we said they insisted that I have to be sent home. Now, when I’m walking in the halls there are teachers who give me dirty looks and make me feel as if I as a person am wrong.”

- Reported through AHS

“Palestinian students are just trying to do what they can to stand up for people, and being humiliated, censored, and made to feel like they’re existence is controversial or wrong is physically and mentally exhausting. That we have to convince people of our pain, specifically teachers and administration, and that we deserve to have a voice and that we exist.”

- Reported through AHS

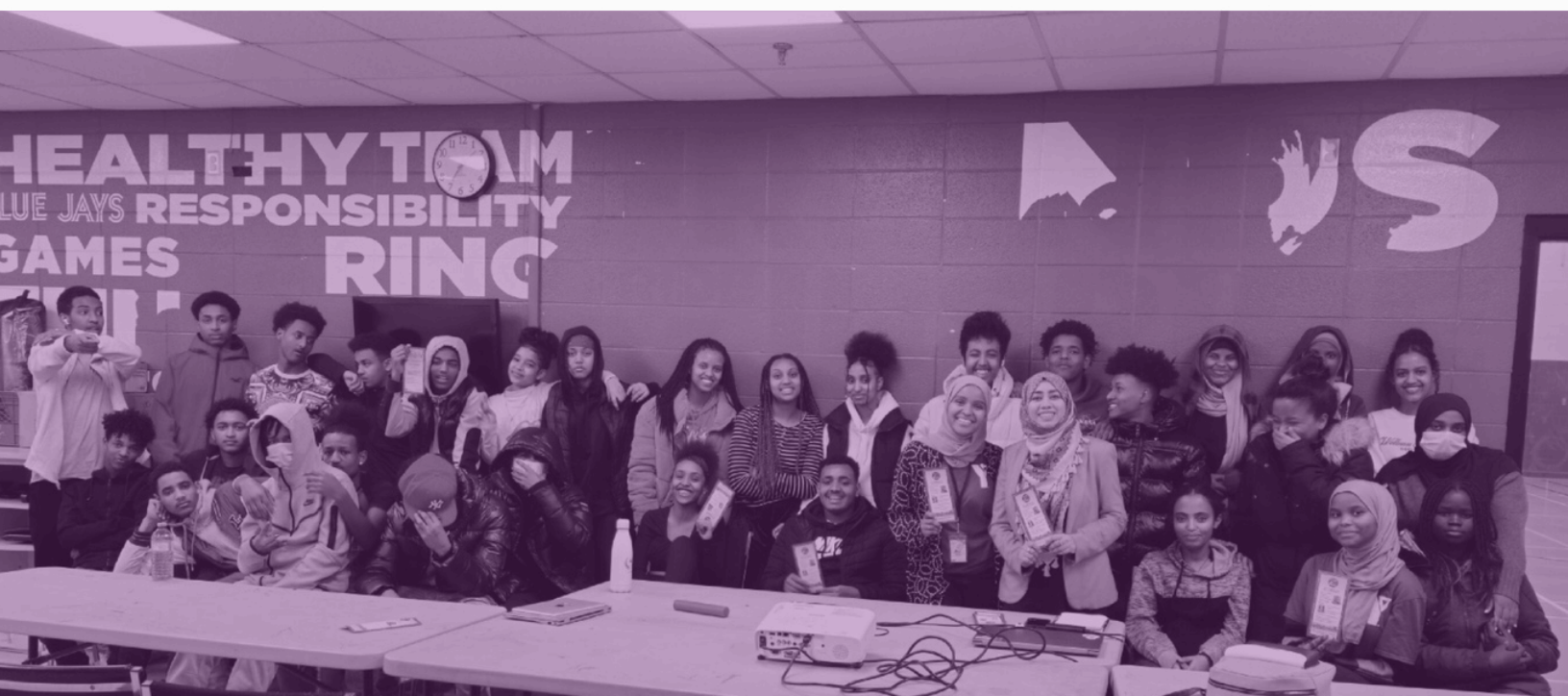
In addition to administrative struggles, there were also lots of experiences of peer related hate and harm that included mocking, derogatory statements, and the yelling and labelling of ‘ Hamas’. There were numerous instances of rejecting all claims of pro-Palestine, anti-Palestine posters and the alienation of spaces on campus for Muslim, Arab, Palestinian and other affected students. These actions took physical form on campus as well as online. Several cases expressed feelings that there was a severe lack of action among school officials to help address what they were experiencing and help them stay safe. Tying these experiences together, students felt that they were being silenced, unsupported, not recognized and all around erased, all because of a perceived ‘political agenda’:

“I don’t feel comfortable or supported by my school’s administration or teachers. Again and again, I have to convince them that I am not a threat to other students and that any other student who criticizes a government is free to do so and encouraged to express their beliefs, until it comes down to Palestine and Israel.”

- Reported through AHS

Online Spaces- (16 cases)

A total of 16 incidents happened in online environments (either fully, or to a great degree), particularly through social media, private online groups, private messages and posts on websites, etc. A total of 38% of these cases included female/female-identified victims, a further 44% were groups/communities that were targeted. Most cases happening in online spaces happened in the latter half of 2023 and predominately the victims were Muslim. These cases reflected instances of anti-Islamophobia, South-Asian hate, anti-Palestinian discrimination and hate, and homophobia. In this setting, it was most common for hate crimes to be reported (nine cases), followed by hate-incidents (four cases) and online hate (three cases). Among the behaviours and actions reported included: bullying/intimidation, publicly spreading hate against a group and online abuse.



In some cases, hateful speech was more generally being shared and meant to target a community or group:

“There are two individuals that are promoting hateful speech online. It is extremely concerning that these accounts are allowed as they are promoting sexism and homophobia. They are extremely rude and hateful. They should be censored!!!”

- Reported through AHS

“Due to ongoing Palestine war crises, a normal post turns into hate and racism with racist comments.”

- Reported through AHS

But in other instances, private messages were used to personally target, attack and intimidate people:

“I have received WhatsApp messages from the number shown in the screenshot I attached, insulting me, Islam, and God, out of the blue and for no reason! He continued until I blocked their number.”

- Reported through AHS

Housing/Neighbourhood Spaces- (11 cases)

When breaking down the category of housing/neighbourhood spaces, the complexity and depth of persistent and recurring experiences of discrimination and hate quickly become evident. A total of five cases happening in these spaces were classified as hate incidents, four cases were classified as discrimination, and a further two were hate-motivated crimes. A total of eight reported instances were with landlords/ in the neighbourhood and lastly, private residences accounted for three cases.

Stories of excessive harassment were common, both for homeowners and for those renting. For a particular homeowner their house was not felt to be safe due to a neighbour threatening them, making racist comments, slashing their tires, threatening death, provoking them and attacking them in a relentless and ongoing way. In another situation, an Arab family with minors was verbally assaulted by a neighbour who accused them of ‘overpopulating’ their house. Further, they threatened to ‘call an organization to remove some family members from the house’. The outcome of this was their young child expressing that they were living in fear of being taken from their family.

Often in these cases, there was a need for organizing and/or exploring legal services, as well as the need for CMW support to be ongoing over the course of months. In one instance, it was a seven-month process to help a family facing rental discrimination move towards a resolution. The resolution ended up being that the family moved to another rental with support from CMW and away from discriminatory property managers:

“I am writing to you from my darkest thoughts. My husband and I are so stressed out about the issue that we are facing. Even my kids are having a breakdown, especially my little one because of the little space we are living in... So, we tried to upgrade from a 2 to a 3-bedroom unit. At first, they were responding to us, and it was not available, and we were told to come at the end of each month and see. But now they said they cannot rent to us anymore and there is a rule we must follow. We tried to phone and send emails to understand what the problem was and what the reasons are and to try to work it out, but no response from their end. I was told that nobody was going to respond to me or even talk to me and it was just the rules...I feel discriminated against and hated by them, and I don't know what to do at this point.”

- Reported through AHS

Anti-Hate Services

Hate & Discrimination reporting and victim support system

by the

Coalition of Muslim Women KW



Coalition of
Muslim Women
Kitchener-Waterloo



Stores and Private Business - (11 cases)

A total of seven incidents happened in shopping malls, grocery stores or retail shops and a further four were experienced in private businesses. In this setting, it was most common for hate incidents to be reported (six cases), followed by discrimination (three cases) and hate-motivated crimes (two cases). Among the behaviours and actions reported included: verbal hate/harassment, discrimination, vandalism and following/intimidation:

“... He then said in an intimidating tone, 'You people are all racist. But don't call the cops on me.' He then left. Some other men from the store approached her to check if she was ok.”

- Reported through AHS

Workplaces - (8 cases)

A total of eight incidents were documented that happened in workplaces. In this setting, it was most common for discrimination to be reported (four cases), followed by hate crimes (three cases) and hate-incidents (one case). Among the behaviours and actions reported include: Discrimination, bullying/intimidation, and publicly spreading hate against a group. Those reporting hate shared some of their struggles:

“Someone at my workplace asked me if Muslims give lashes for committing crimes in an accusatory and hateful way.”

- Reported through AHS

“My friend got told that Palestinians deserve to die.”

- Reported through AHS

“My colleague who is white and from Canada, made racist comments two times, against foreign (immigrant) people in Canada, and against Muslim people...The manager discriminated between myself and this colleague who was in the same position as me.”

- Reported through AHS

Government Offices- (3 cases)

A total of three incidents were documented as happening at government offices. In this setting, cases were classified as discrimination (one case), hate incident (one case) and hate motivated crime (one case). Among the behaviours and actions reported included: Discrimination, physical assault, and verbal hate/harassment. Two cases included incidents at a drive test centre in Kitchener. In one situation, the person reporting hate shared that their driving evaluator was being discriminatory. In another instance, a participant shared:

“I was waiting for my turn at the Drive Test Center in Kitchener (Ottawa St) when a white woman began shouting racial slurs and expletives against 'Brown people'... She denied allegations that she was saying racist things. She then grabbed my phone and hit me with it and fled. Initially the Drive Test staff discouraged me from calling the police, but then they called 911.”

- Reported through AHS

Understanding impact



The depth of impact and trauma experienced by incidents of hate/discrimination are profound. Numerous reports shared intimate details around this. Some reports talked about the negative physical and mental health impacts of these experiences:

“There was a white guy sitting in the car and while passing by he started swearing at me. Calling me names and he said ‘go back to your country’. I felt helpless and scared... It just took a toll on my mental health that I could not stop shaking. I forgot that I also got hit by a car just now and now this guy is swearing at me for no reason. I felt helpless and scared. This guy was horrible.”

- Reported through AHS

“White male... rolled his window down and yelled at my visibly Muslim mother (wearing a hijab) ‘go die, go back to your country and get out of Canada’. My mother was incredibly hurt and started crying. This deeply hurt our family.”

- Reported through AHS

While others talked about the ongoing fear they developed as a consequence of the hate they experienced. One report shared:

“Principal made announcements about not spreading hate. He especially told 2 students not to talk about Palestinian rights, my friend is scared of wearing her hijab in school, school should be a neutral place, and siding with one side is not nice.”

- Reported through AHS



Bystanders/witnesses

Bystanders/witnesses play an important role in helping to stop instances of hate but also in reporting. A total of 9% of reports were made by bystanders/witnesses, further another 19% were made on behalf of someone, an act of support and solidarity for victims who consent. When bystanders did intervene to reduce the harm being experienced, often they shared about directly checking in with victims as well as monitoring the situation to ensure the victim was safe, before continuing on their way:

“I saw a woman (hijabi) walking down the street and someone passing her said “scum” as she passed. I don't think she understood what he said but I watched her until she safely got inside her building after.”

- Reported through AHS

Another instance of bystander intervention that was captured by AHS was amplified by media coverage and a statement put out by CMW. This instance of hate happened at a drive test centre in Kitchener. A member of the CMW staff stepped into a bystander role to support someone who was at the receiving end

of racist slurs and threats. In this situation the bystander intervening was verbally and physically assaulted. The incident was recorded and lead to an arrest and a request for participation in the Sulah Program.

CMW's statement:

The Coalition of Muslim Women (CMW) is hurt and shocked by the alleged hate-motivated crime Mifrah Abid, Together Against Islamophobia program coordinator, faced on Wednesday, May 17.

The entire organization stands with Mifrah as she takes action to report the alleged hate-motivated assault to the police. We are ready to support Mifrah with our counselling resources as well.

We call on the Waterloo Regional Police Service to take action immediately, to find the person that committed this ugly act and to hold them accountable for the pain they've brought on Mifrah.

As an organization that actively works to counter hate and Islamophobia in the community, we stand with anyone that faces hate. There is no place for such behaviour in any community. Hate doesn't hurt just the person that experiences it, but it also shakes the entire community that already feels marginalized.

While there were shared instances where bystanders intervened, there were also dire situations where that support was missing and led to uninterrupted experiences of escalating hate. One instance of a young Muslim woman on a bus exemplifies this:

“A man was intimidating a young woman wearing a hijab on the bus, invading her personal space, asking derogatory questions, racist Islamophobic comments, and got visibly upset when she wouldn’t engage with him. This caused the girl to get off at a different stop for her own safety and walk home in the rain. Unfortunately, bystanders didn’t intervene.”

- Reported through AHS





SECTION 5

Community Partner Submissions





Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership

Hate and discrimination impact many groups in Waterloo Region. The Immigration Partnership is a collaboration of immigrant and community service, business, municipal, post-secondary and ethno-cultural organizations, and residents working together to create the conditions for immigrants to succeed and help build a welcoming, dynamic community. Being a welcoming community means being free from hate and discrimination. The Immigration Partnership regularly surveys immigrants to understand their experiences of living in Waterloo Region. One quarter (24%) of the nearly 1,700 participants in the 2023 Immigrant Survey had experienced discrimination in the past year. The level of discrimination reported in 2023 is unchanged from previous surveys in 2021 (24%) and 2019 (22%). The most frequently reported reasons for discrimination were race/skin colour (48%), ethnicity/culture (36%), accent (31%), language ability (27%) and immigration status (26%).

Reasons for discrimination	
Category	% of participants
Race or skin color	48%
Ethnicity or culture	36%
Accent	31%



Language ability	27%
Immigration status	26%
Religion	21%
Physical appearance (other than skin color)	15%
Income	9%
Gender	7%
Age	7%
Sexual orientation	3%
Disability (either a disability that people can see or one that is invisible)	2%
Other	7%

Source: 2023 Immigrant Survey

Immigrants were mostly likely to experience discrimination in work contexts – either when applying for a job (31%) or at work (31%). It also frequently occurred in stores, banks or restaurants (30%), or when looking for housing (22%) and interacting with neighbours (19%).

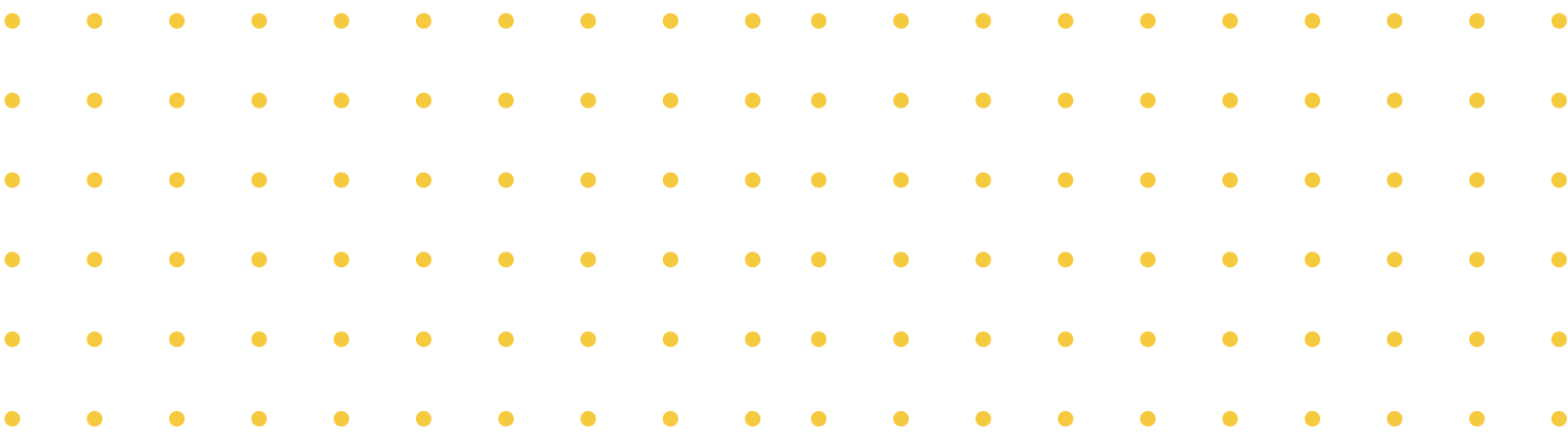
Reasons for discrimination	
Category	% of participants
When applying for a job or a promotion	31%
At my job – for example from supervisors, co-workers or clients	31%
In a store, bank or restaurant	30%
When looking for housing	22%
When interacting with my neighbors	19%
At school or university	16%
At community/public events	16%
While using public areas, such as parks or sidewalks	16%
While using buses, trains or taxis	16%
When seeing a doctor or in other health care settings	10%
When accessing other community services	10%
When interacting with the police	7%
While using libraries, community/recreational centers, arenas	6%
When crossing the border into Canada	5%
When interacting with the courts	3%

Source: 2023 Immigrant Survey



Immigrants who reported experiencing discrimination were less likely to feel Waterloo Region is a welcoming community. They were less likely to have positive wellbeing or feel safe in their community. They were more likely to have a weak sense of belonging and feel isolated. For more results from the 2023 Immigrant Survey see www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/ImmigrantSurvey.

Report made on behalf of Immigration Partnership, Waterloo Region





Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region

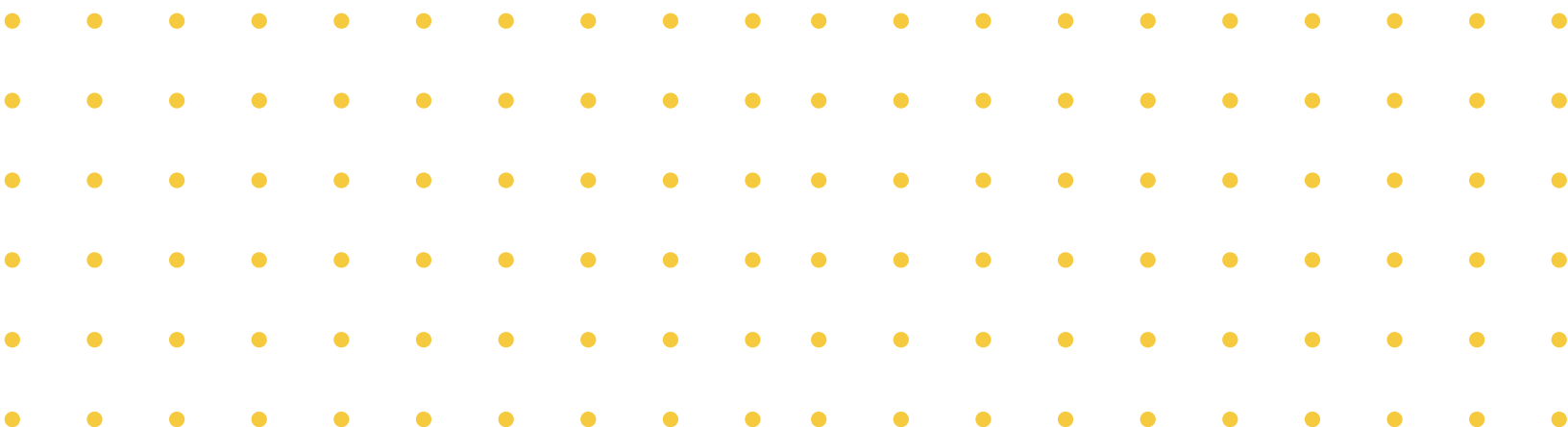
In the past year, we at the CCAWR have received fewer reports of racism and discrimination in the community. We should be clear that we do not believe that incidents of hate crimes, racism or discrimination have decreased, but rather that they are being communicated less frequently to us. While it is difficult to say why this is the case, we believe that perhaps the Waterloo Region community is returning to the “status quo” after the more visible BLM movement in 2020, and Caribbean individuals may feel less comfortable or safe in reporting such incidents. The two incidents that we are sharing today indicate an increase in the seriousness of hate crimes against the Caribbean community (primarily the Black Caribbean community and additionally to those of Indo-Caribbean or other mixed-ethnicities of Caribbean origins).

The first incident close to our community happened to a family member of one of our board members. The Caribbean individual, a Black male, with a larger physical stature, was standing outside of his family member’s home, peacefully enjoying some fresh air. He was approached by a White male (a neighbour) who began, without provocation, questioning him and spewing racial slurs at him. Our Caribbean member didn’t respond. The White male went back to his home, and

then returned with an axe, both threatening and intimidating our Caribbean member, who decided to call the police rather than engaging in a physical altercation (knowing that this would not end well for a robust Black male). The police arrived and apprehended the White male. We believe this is yet one clear example of how emboldened individuals are becoming in their power.

And, we could not write our contribution without paying tribute to Nicholas Nembhard, age 31, who was killed by police outside of his home in Kitchener, in February, 2024. Nicholas, a Black male of Jamaican descent was in a mental health crisis when his family called the police for assistance. While it is beyond the nature of our involvement at CCAWR to report on the altercation, we know that Nicholas and his family needed assistance. Black men are routinely neglected and excluded in the system of mental health care, and we reiterate that our region desperately needs a trauma-responsive and culturally-intentional crisis intervention team to respond to calls for mental health crisis and support. We honour Nicholas and his life and are deeply saddened by the loss of his life.

Report by Carla Beharry on behalf of Carribean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region.





Crow Shield Lodge

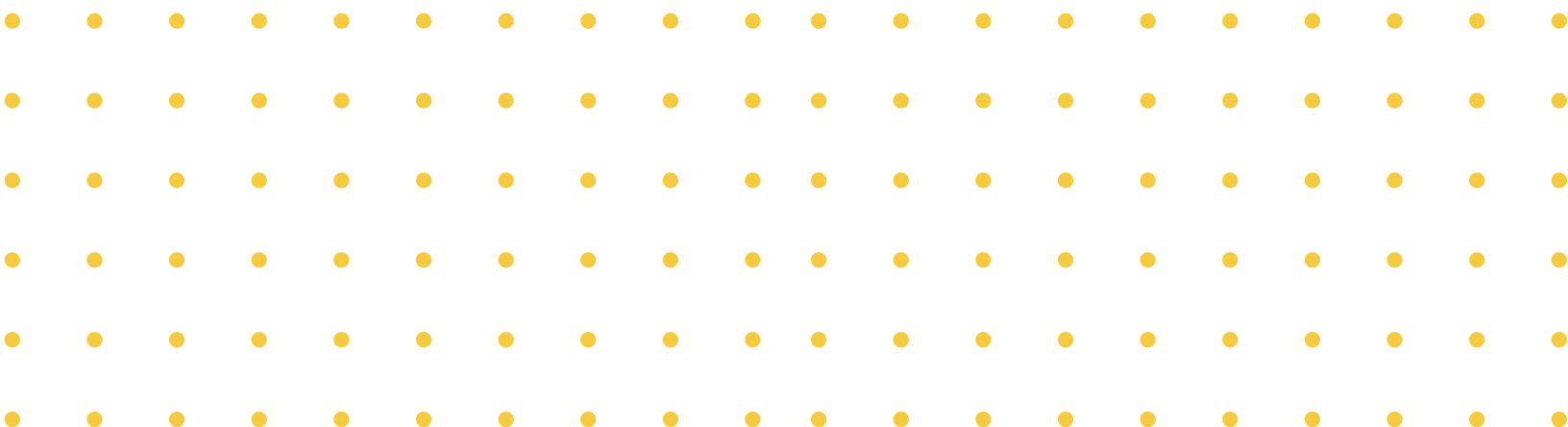
When considering the amount of hate-crimes, hate-speech, and discrimination that is reported by the urban Indigenous community, it is apparent that there is still a large distrust and disconnect between the community and policing services. We feel that this could be attributed to the fact that when the urban Indigenous community gathers to speak on a topic that is of importance to us, such as MMIWG2S or Orange Shirt Day, is when we experience the highest level of hate speech. In simple terms, it feels that when we use our voices, it brings out more hate.

Many community members have experienced harmful and violent language during times that are meant to be uplifting for the Indigenous community, but feel reporting these incidents will fall on deaf ears due to the long-standing history of Canada ignoring the voices of Indigenous peoples. Beyond that, many have expressed that the Waterloo region does not take the Indigenous

community seriously; an example of this can be seen with the Queen Victoria Statue located in Willow River Park which continues to stand, despite the community expressing how much emotional pain it causes.

Overall, until the urban Indigenous community truly feels heard within the region, it will be hard to gauge exactly how widespread an issue of hate crimes and speech are. With that being said, we can estimate that 1 in 3 urban Indigenous community members will experience hate speech while residing within the region based on what has been shared with us by community members.

Report from Clarence Cachagee on behalf of Crow Shield Lodge.





Waterloo Region District School Board

Hate activity at WRDSB sites or impacting WRDSB students represents some of the most destructive forms of human rights-based discrimination by promoting hatred against identifiable groups of people. Hate activity is a violation of Board Policy 1017 - Human Rights and can be reported directly to the WRDSB's Human Rights Branch. These incidents are often addressed directly at the school level by staff and administration using the DIRECT Tool. When additional support is required, the Human Rights Branch may be contacted using the Human Rights incident Reporting Form.

The Human Rights Branch has two procedures to respond to experiences of code-based harassment and/or discrimination affecting WRDSB members. Administrative Procedure 1210 - Code-Based Human Rights Complaint Resolution Process for Staff and Administrative Procedure 1215 - Code-Based Human Rights Complaint Resolution Process for Non-Staff. Staff, students and families most often contact the Human Rights Branch in response to incidents related to disability, gender identity/gender expression, race and creed;



concerns related to any of the 17 grounds protected by the code can be supported by the Human Rights Branch. The work of the WRDSB Human Rights Branch can be found in the 2022-23 Annual Report.

We continue to build a culture that centres human rights and creates a climate where students, staff and families can speak openly about their experiences as it relates to this.

The table below is from the Human Rights Branch Annual Report and illustrates the social areas and protected grounds that were identified through complaints. Please note that a single complainant may have multiple intersecting grounds of identity. Therefore, the number of social areas will not match the number of complaints.

Code-Protected Ground	Social Area	
	Employment	Services
Age	1	0
Ancestry, colour, race	7	4
Citizenship	0	0
Ethnic origin	4	0
Place of origin	1	0
Creed	1	1
Disability	11	10
Family Status	1	0
Marital status	1	0
Gender Identity	1	6
Gender Expression	1	6
Sex	1	1
Sexual Orientation	3	4
Record of Offences	0	Applies in employment only
Receipt of Public Assistance	Applies to housing only	

Report made on behalf of Waterloo Region District School Board

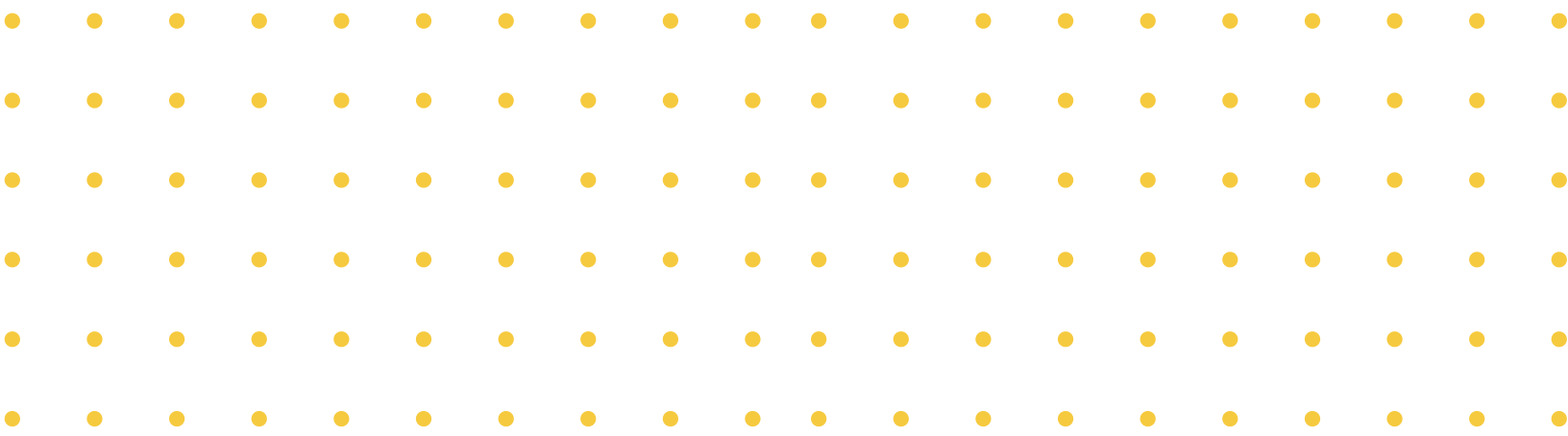


Nigerians in the Region of Waterloo

Members of our community have repeatedly reported instances where black boys, particularly those of Nigerian descent, are viewed with suspicion. This perception often leads to harassment and unwarranted stereotyping and profiling. This profiling not only undermines their sense of safety but also erodes their trust in the institutions meant to protect them. There have also been multiple cases where individuals from our community have faced eviction from their homes without receiving adequate support or intervention from the police. When reports of illegal evictions are made, the response from law enforcement is often slow or nonexistent, leaving vulnerable families without recourse. This lack of adequate response exacerbates the housing insecurity faced by many Nigerian Canadians, contributing to a cycle of instability and marginalization. Our children attending schools in the Waterloo region have experienced significant disparities in educational support and resources. Many of them report not receiving adequate information or guidance to prepare for university, placing them at a disadvantage compared to their peers.

Additionally, incidents involving Nigerian students, such as accidents or bullying, are often poorly handled by school authorities. There is a disturbing trend of these incidents not being properly investigated or documented, leaving affected students and their families without justice or reassurance. In some cases, Nigerian students have faced undeserved suspensions. These disciplinary actions are frequently carried out without thorough internal investigations, suggesting a bias against black students. Such measures not only disrupt the education of these students but also perpetuate a sense of alienation and unfair treatment within the school environment.

Report made on behalf of Nigerians in Waterloo Region.





Willow River Centre

Since the opening of Willow River Centre in downtown Kitchener, the only Two Spirit run organization has been the target of hate crimes, vandalism, theft of property and racial/homophobic harassment. The staff and community members who frequent Willow River Centre have been extra cautious in public spaces, rally events, vigils, and protests. There is a heightened awareness to never walk alone, accompany folks to their vehicles, keep recording devices close at hand, and document incidents as they occur. There is an increased need for additional security measures that grassroots organizations such as Willow River Centre can't financially afford.

The First Nations, Metis, and Inuit queer and trans community members in Waterloo Region should never have to fear being on our own lands, however we are often targeted due to rising homophobia, solidarity with other racialized groups, and our presence at social justice events.

Report from Amy Smoke on behalf of Willow River Centre



SECTION 6

Next Steps

NEXT STEPS

The voices who came forward to report their experiences of hate this year paint a vivid picture of the growing struggles facing Waterloo Region as we consider our local context within the bounds of global crisis and deep division. From youth who are struggling to reconcile their life at school with their social justice and heritage to women just existing in public spaces that are targeted with verbal hate and harassment because of the religious and cultural clothing they are wearing. From families who are standing up against discrimination and harassment in their housing, to people overrun with hate and death threats in online spaces.

With every report, we're reminded of the importance of showing up for each other and being supportive. For CMW it means working with the Region of Waterloo and the Upstream Fund to continue to secure the opportunity to provide leadership around community reporting. Community reporting is grassroots, community based, and provides an important alternative to mainstream reporting services that is critical for many community members. It also ensures that those who are seeking support to resolve, process and work past trauma are receiving that support they want unconditionally, as they define it, and in real time.

But for the greater community, let this report be a reminder of the need for all of us to step up and be supportive bystanders and to push back against hate rhetoric. By doing this together we can all contribute to keeping the community safe.

As the CMW continues to build momentum for this initiative year after year, through outreach, education, trust building and community partnerships we will see more reporting. When we see more reporting, we will learn more about the experiences and trends around hate in our community. And when we are

learning, as neighbours, community members, social services, decision makers, leaders and advocates we are more likely to influence change that will bring forward a better version of Waterloo Region.

And when we create change for the better that is upstream and preventative in nature it will lead to the safer community we need. It is then that we know that we have finally been accountable to the voices that gather in this reporting process. An admirable and achievable goal.

REPORT HATE & DISCRIMINATION

Report Hate or Discrimination

Have you faced or seen
racism or Islamophobia?

We can help.

@report@cmw-kw.org

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