



FOURTH ANNUAL

SNAPSHOT OF HATE IN WATERLOO REGION



WAYS TO REPORT HATE

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Coalition of
Muslim Women
Kitchener-Waterloo
Muslim Women Making Change

A REVIEW OF
2024

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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

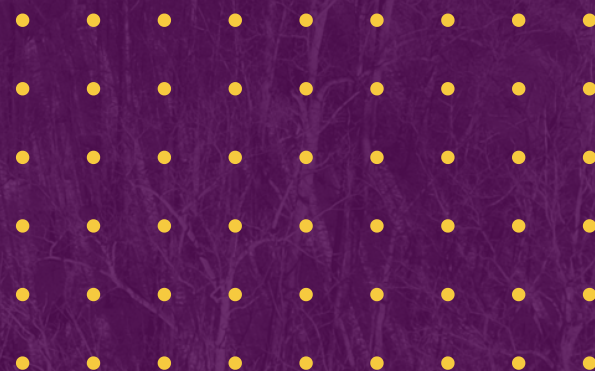
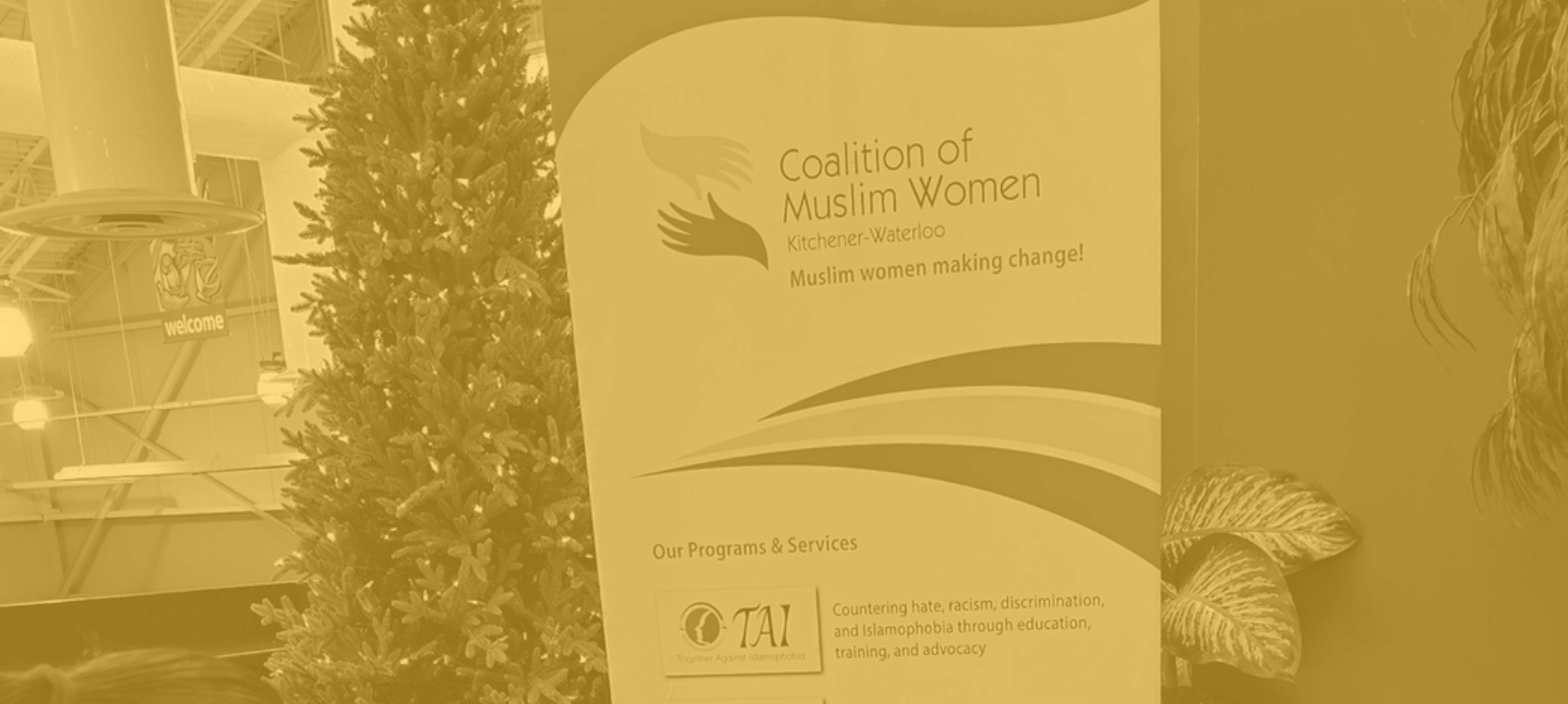


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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

“We are subjected to a lot of hate where we live and the objective is to instill fear and use intimidation and harassment to drive us from our home.”

- Reported through AHS

The 2024 Anti-Hate Report offers a necessary and urgent reflection on the rise in hate incidents affecting communities across Waterloo region and beyond. Built on data collected by the Coalition of Muslim Women (CMW) from their Anti-Hate Services (AHS) program, an initiative that empowers individuals to report and seek support for hate incidents, this report shows a 38% rise in hate-related cases over the past year, highlighting a concerning environment and community experience for racialized, immigrant, and religious minority communities.

Online spaces emerged as the most frequent setting for hate, with a dramatic jump from 16 cases in 2023 to 64 in 2024. These incidents often targeted individuals via social media platforms, direct messages, online groups, or websites, and overwhelmingly involved racism (72%), anti-immigrant hate (36%), Islamophobia (31%), and antisemitism (27%). Notably, gendered Islamophobia appeared as a significant theme, especially for female victims in digital spaces, followed by incidents in public areas.

Young people under 24 also faced increased vulnerability, with 31% of their cases occurring in educational settings—spaces most associated with racism and Islamophobia, often in the form of discrimination. Public and private spaces such as homes, workplaces, and businesses were also

frequent scenes of harassment, with some reports detailing extreme verbal abuse from neighbors escalating to physical assault. These trends underscore an urgent need for more robust, intersectional, and location-specific supports.

At the heart of this data is a story



about voice and validation. For many, the act of reporting hate is more than documentation—it is a courageous stand against isolation, invisibility, and silence. Community-based reporting through AHS plays a vital role in ensuring that those who may not feel safe turning to institutions like police still have somewhere to go. The AHS program fills this gap by offering accessible, culturally informed, and trauma-aware pathways for individuals to share their experiences. It ensures that their stories are seen, believed, and used to inform real strategies for prevention and healing. This year’s data reminds us that community-led solutions are not only responsive, they are essential. More than a report, this document serves as a call to action, demanding systemic change, increased community education, and broader support networks to ensure the safety, dignity, and inclusion of all residents. This grassroots data collection not only sheds light on the real scope of hate in the region but it also acts as a tool for us to use to inform prevention strategies and policy recommendations that reflect the lived realities of those most impacted. The CMW continues to lead this critical work through advocacy, education, and frontline service, urging communities and institutions alike to confront hate in all its forms.

“Before connecting with AHS, I felt completely lost. I didn’t think anyone would understand what I was going through. Now, I feel more empowered and informed to take action. Thank you for standing with people who often feel invisible.”

- Reported through AHS

“ —

...I respectfully request the CMW to assist us in resolving this issue and ensuring the safety of our neighborhood. Any help in facilitating a solution with local authorities or other resources would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to your support.

- 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.

The background image is a composite of two scenes. The top scene shows a woman with dark hair tied back, looking down at something out of frame. She is in a crowded indoor space, possibly a community center or library, with other people visible in the background. The bottom scene shows a table covered with a dark cloth. On the table are several informational brochures or pamphlets, some fanned out. There are also decorative items, including a large white flower, a small cluster of berries, and some dried fruit. The entire image has a warm, yellowish-orange tint.

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 again this past year, participating in a variety of prevention and community engagement activities. These activities engaged over 2500 community members through 132 distinct outreach activities (including bridge-building meetings, visits, sessions, presentations, booths, and through being speakers/ panelists at community events) as well as twenty-one AHS presentations, workshops and education sessions.

132

Distinct outreach
activities

2506

Community
members engaged.

21

AHS Presentations



Anti-Hate Education Sessions not only provided community partners with increased knowledge on hate and discrimination, but also resulted in new AHS case referrals - underscoring its immediate value. Feedback from diverse community members following recent presentations included:

“Thank you so much for sharing the important information about knowing your rights in Canada. I wish I had known about the protections under the OHRC earlier, as I faced discrimination at my workplace as a new immigrant and lost my job because of it.”

- AHS Presentation Feedback

“As a second-generation Canadian, I have experienced hate incidents but never reported them because I was afraid. Thank you for sharing critical information about the importance of reporting hate and discrimination. That data is essential for driving positive change. I’m also relieved to know there are services in our region where I can report incidents and seek support anonymously.”

- AHS Presentation Feedback

In addition to its community education and engagement activities, the program documented 159 cases of hate. A total of 66 cases requested further support at the time of reporting, of which 40 progressed into receiving pointed and/or ongoing support. AHS clients have expressed their appreciation for the support received during difficult times:

“I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to you for your support and assistance regarding the recent incident. The work you do is invaluable to our community, and I truly appreciate your efforts.”

- AHS Client

“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 are so valuable for people like myself. Insha Allah, may you stay healthy and continue working like this for a long time.”

- AHS Client

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 included multiple systems beyond just social services, such as health, education, law enforcement, and legal support. Each year, 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.

A photograph of a community meeting with people seated at tables. A purple overlay covers the bottom half of the image, containing the section title. In the background, a screen displays a survey question.

SECTION 3

DATA COLLECTION

2. How do you think communities can effectively counter rising hate incidents and promote solidarity against adversity?

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, 2024 and December 31, 2024.

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.

Secondary sources of data informing this report was received from Waterloo Region Police Services (WRPS) and Conestoga College who submitted their observations from 2024.



The background image shows a person wearing a hijab and a patterned top, sitting at a wooden table and working on a laptop. The laptop screen displays a presentation titled 'Anti-Hate Services' with the subtitle 'Prevention & Intervention Strategies and Anti-Hate Support Services'. The presentation includes a list of services and a photo of a person. On the table, there are several brochures, a white cup with a maple leaf logo, and a clear plastic cup. In the background, there is a large mural on a wall with horizontal slats, depicting a stylized cityscape with a lighthouse and people. The room has track lighting on the ceiling.

SECTION 4

DATA TRENDS

TRENDS IN REPORTING

Comparative Analysis 2024 to 2023

In 2024, a total of 159 cases were collected through AHS - marking a 38% increase in cases over the previous year. Not only did the number of reported cases grow this year, but the data also reflected changes across demographics, incident types, and locations.

Notably, reports of hate targeting groups increased in 2024, growing from 22 cases to 50 cases. An increase in incidents aimed at overall communities is further demonstrated by a surge in cases reporting public spreading of hate against a group (14 to 35).

While 96 cases were located or took place online in Waterloo Region, reports from other municipalities in Ontario - as well as other provinces and territories - grew exponentially. The AHS website supported 76 individuals outside of Waterloo Region in reporting hate either within their communities or from online sources, compared to 19 in 2023. Of these, the majority were located in the Greater Toronto Area (16 cases) while an additional 6 incidents were reported from neighbouring communities in Southwestern Ontario. Reports from outside Ontario included Quebec (8), Alberta (8), British Columbia (8), as well as Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland & Labrador, New Brunswick, Northwest Territories, and Yukon - demonstrating recognition of AHS' services beyond Waterloo Region.

As the total number of reports grew from 2023 to 2024, changes in incidents related to the victims' demographics were also noticed. Incidents involving Asian victims increased from 41 cases in 2023 to 65 cases this past year, while reports involving African victims almost doubled from 2023 (8 cases) to 2024 (15 cases). Further, incidents involving Indigenous and bi-racial victims were seen



again in 2024 after zero cases reported in 2023.

Changes were also noted to the type of hate incidents experienced by reporters. Across all cases, hate crimes increased from 17 in 2023 to 46 in 2024 - and was particularly experienced by youth under 24 (8% of cases vs. 25% of cases). Youth also reported a wider range of incident types compared to 2023, with reports of bullying/intimidation, public spreading of hate, and hateful symbols in 2024. Meanwhile, incidents occurring in education settings decreased not only for youth (55% to 31%), but also across all cases (23% to 9%).

Considering ongoing political climates, it is important to note the large increase of anti-immigrant hate (xenophobia) amongst reasons for incidents - spiking from 6% in 2023 to 40% in 2024 across all cases, especially amongst female/female-identifying victims (7 cases vs. 29 cases) and youth (1 case vs. 13 cases). Female/female-identifying victims also reported an increase in anti-Black racism (2 cases vs. 7 cases), meanwhile reporting incidents of anti-Indigenous racism not previously seen in 2023. Youth also reported 5 cases of anti-Black racism, a change from zero reports in 2023. At the same time, a large decrease in Islamophobia incidents with youth victims was noted from 2023 (76%) to 2024 (26%).

However, large increases in multiple reasons for incidents occurred across all cases, including racism (from 42% to 80%), antisemitism (from 3% to 13%), homophobia and/or transphobia (from 1 case to 15 cases), anti-Black racism (from 1 case to 24 cases), anti-Indigenous hate (from 0 cases to 14 cases) and anti-Asian racism (from 5% to 11%).

Specifically for 2024, the key populations reflected in this report include female/female-identified and youth victims under the age of 24. A total of 61 cases (38%) had victims who were female/female-identified, and further 32 cases (20%) included victims who were youth under the age of 24.

61

Total reports with victims
who were female/
female-identified

159

Total reports for
2024

32

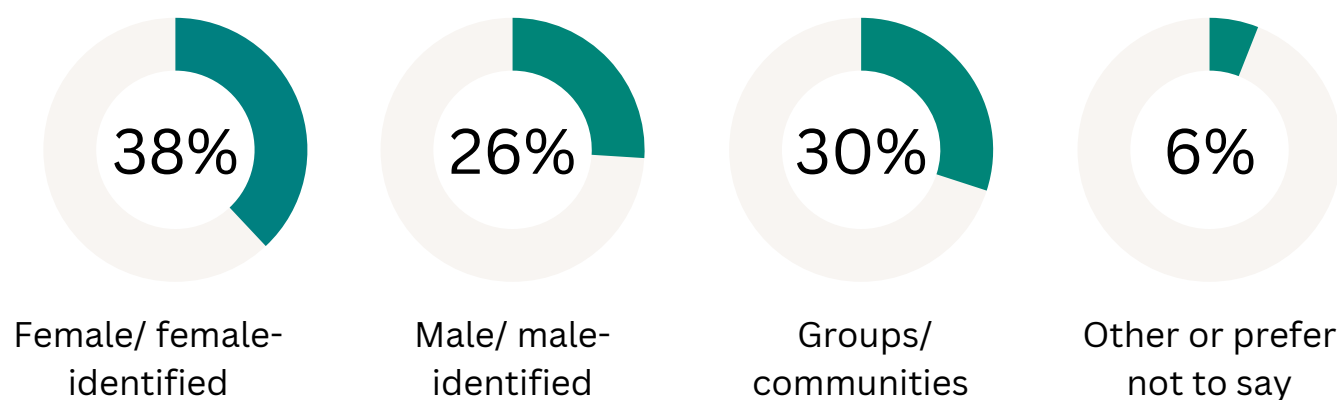
Total reports with
victims who were youth
under the age of 24



Demographics

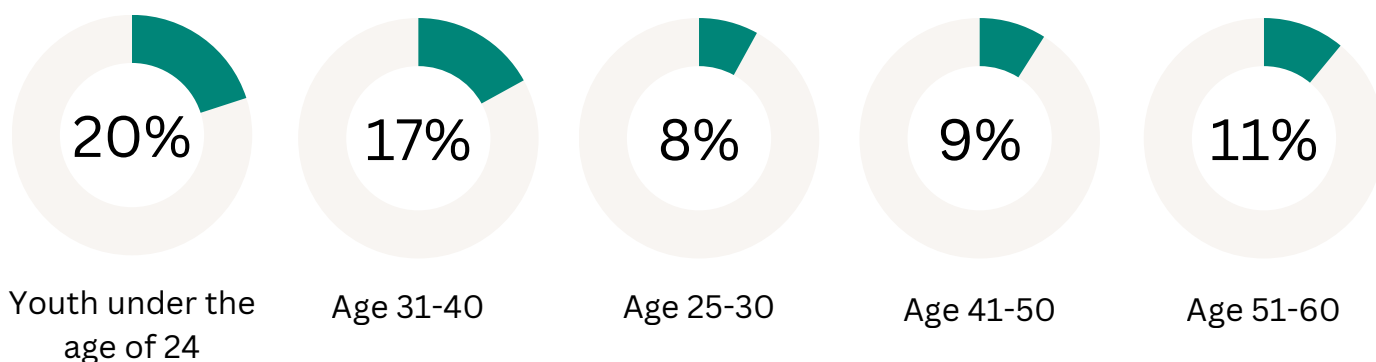
Gender

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, 61 cases (38%) included a female or female-identified victim, 41 cases (26%) included a male or male-identified victim, 47 cases (30%) included groups/communities being targeted where gender did not apply, five cases (3%) responded as other, and five cases (3%) preferred not to say.



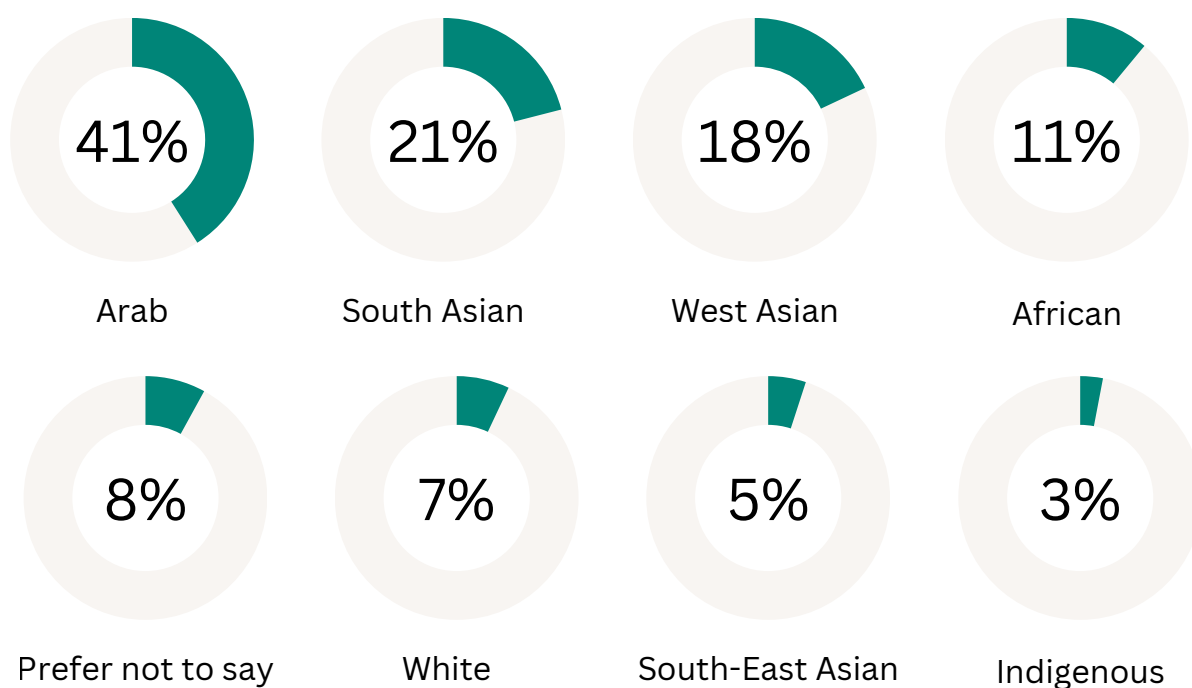
Age

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 32 cases (20%). The next most prominent age group represented was ages 31-40 with 27 cases (17%). A total of 12 cases (8%) included victims between the ages of 25-30, 15 cases (9%) included victims between the ages of 41-50, 18 cases (11%) included victims between the ages of 51-60, three cases included a victim age 60+ and 50 cases (31%) included a group or community that was targeted where age did not apply.

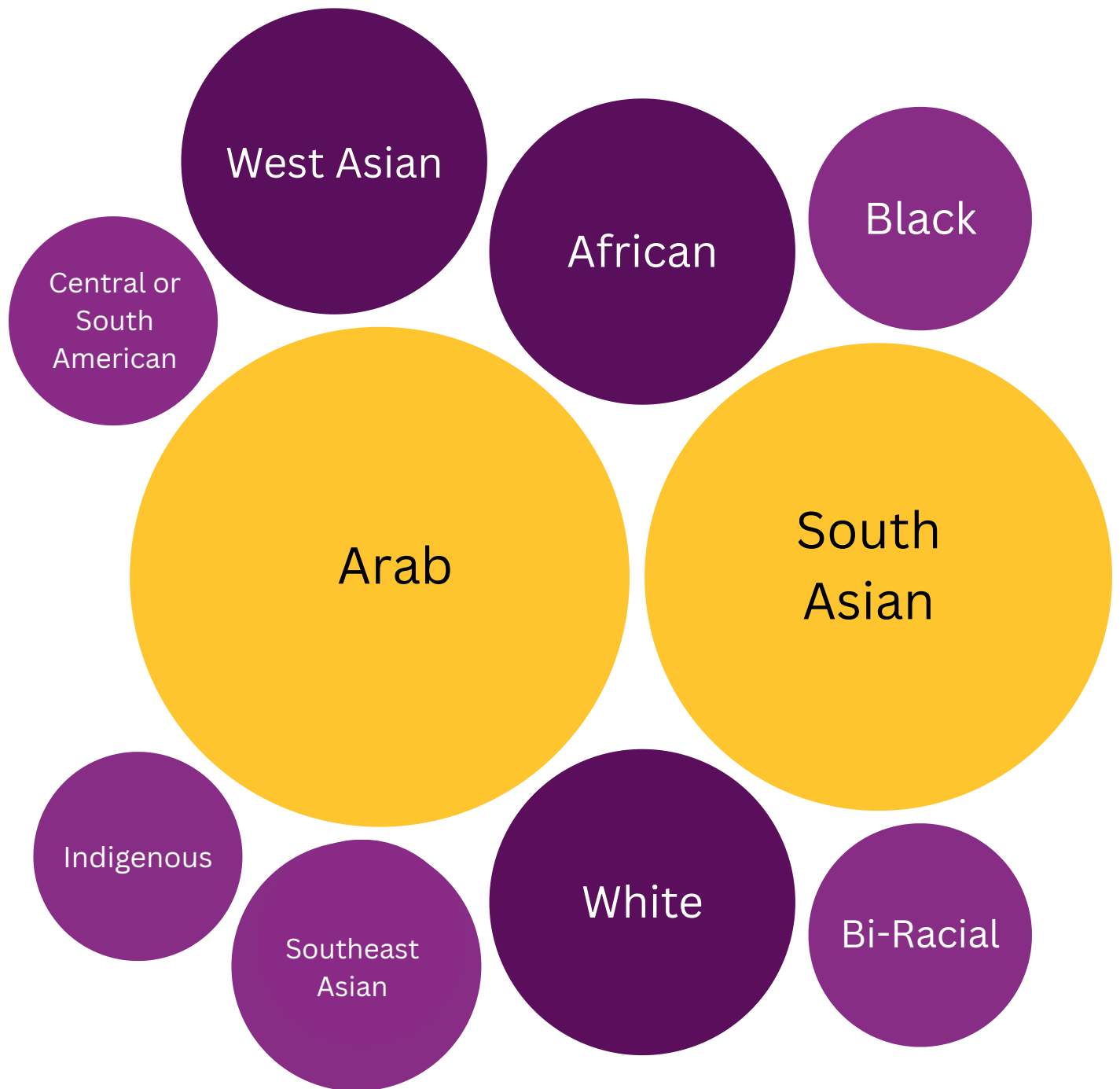


Race/ Ethnicity of Victim

Those reporting hate were asked the race/ethnicity of the victim. Of the 61 cases that included female/ female-identified victims, 25 (41%) were Arab, 13 (21%) were South Asian, 11 (18%) were West Asian, 7 (11%) were African, 4 (7%) were white, 3 (5%) were South-East Asian, 2 (3%) were Indigenous, 1 (2%) was black, 1 (2%) was bi-racial, 1 (2%) was Central or South American. An additional five people preferred not to say.

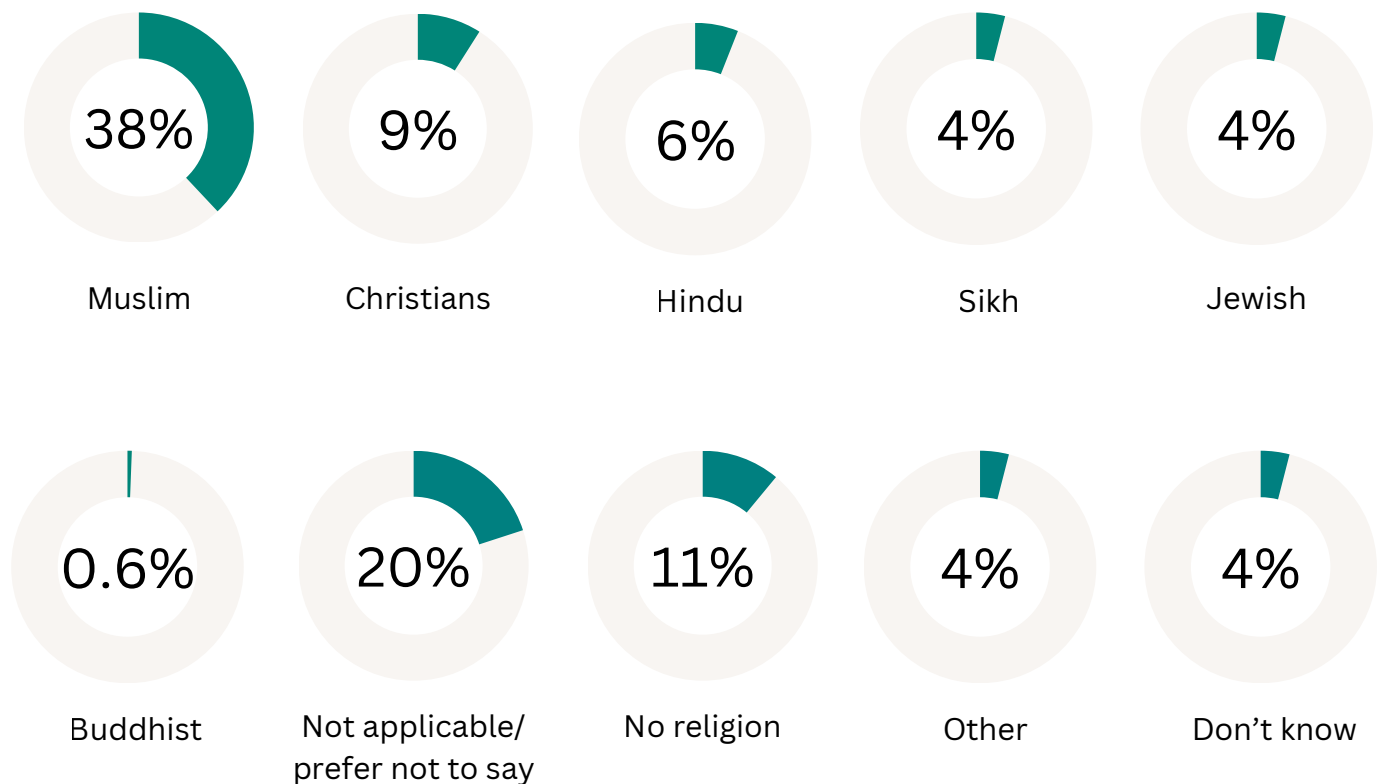


When looking at the race/ethnicity of victims across all of the cases, 40 were Arab, 35 were South Asian, 20 were West Asian, 15 were African, 15 were white, 10 were South-East Asian, 8 were Black, 8 were bi-racial, 7 were Indigenous, 7 were Central or South American, 7 identified as other/prefer not to say and 35 were not applicable (typically because a diverse group was affected).



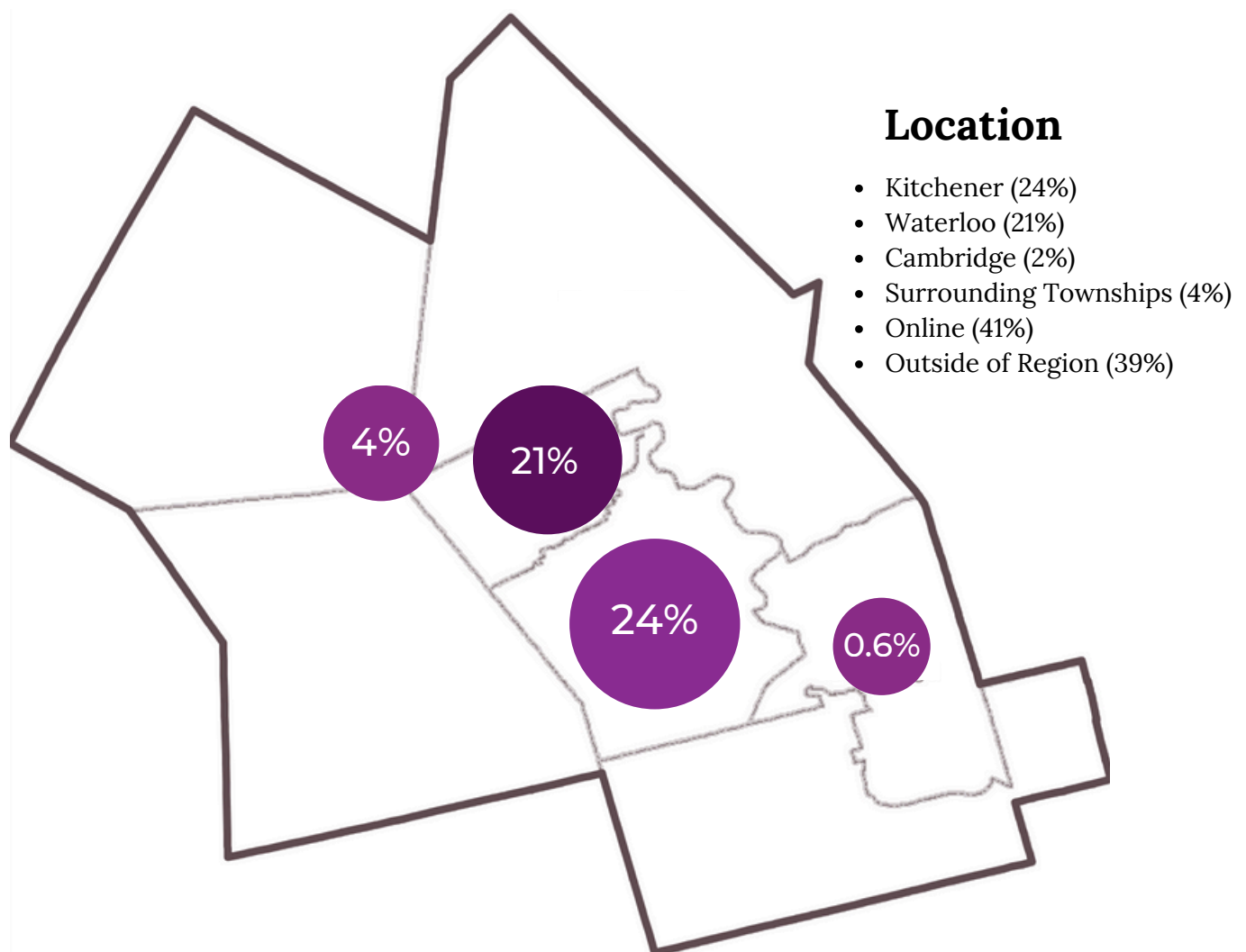
Religion of Victim

Those reporting hate were asked the religion of the victim. Of the total reports, 60 (38%) victims were identified as Muslim, 17 (11%) responded as no religion, 14 (9%) responded as Christian, 9 (6%) responded as Hindu, 7 (4%) responded as Sikh, 6 (4%) responded as Jewish, and one responded as Buddhist. Further, 6 (4%) responded that they don't know, 6 (4%) responded as 'other' and 32 (20%) responded as not applicable or prefer not to say.



Geographic location of reported incidents

A total of 79 cases happened in spaces/places within the geographic boundaries of Waterloo Region, making up 50% of total cases. A further 63 cases (39%) were from outside of Waterloo Region, including Guelph and Greater Toronto Area. Waterloo Region's urban centres were more likely to be locations of reported hate or discrimination, Kitchener accounting for 38 cases (24%), Waterloo accounting for 34 cases (21%). Further, Cambridge accounted for one case (0.6%), and the townships accounted for six cases (4%). Lastly, 65 cases (41%) were experienced in an online space, sometimes from people living in the aforementioned geographic communities.



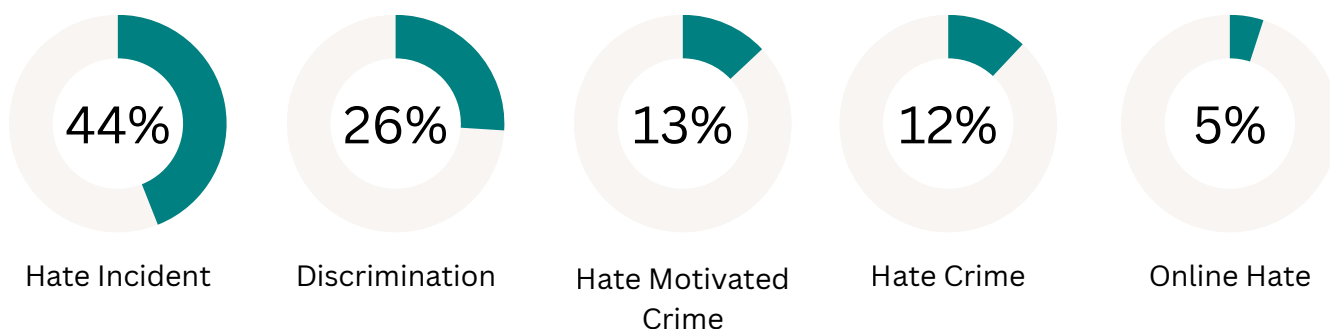


Types of hate experienced

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

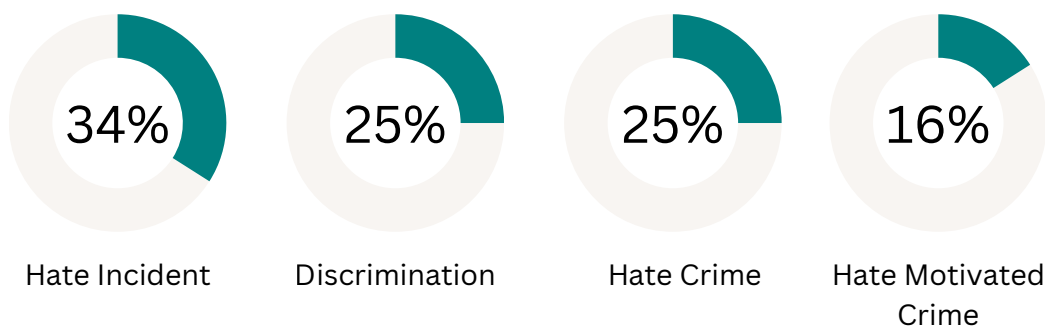
- **Hate Crime-** Criminal offences (promoting genocide, public incitement, and hatred) against an identifiable minority group that are specified in the Criminal code of Canada.
- **Hate Motivated Crime-** Criminal acts with an element of hate, based in race, religion, ethnicity, gender, etc.
- **Hate 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 61 cases that included female/ female-identified victims, 27 cases (44%) were classified as hate incidents, 16 cases (26%) were classified as discrimination, 8 cases (13%) were classified as hate motivated crimes, 7 cases (12%) were classified as hate crimes, and 3 cases (5%) were classified as online hate.



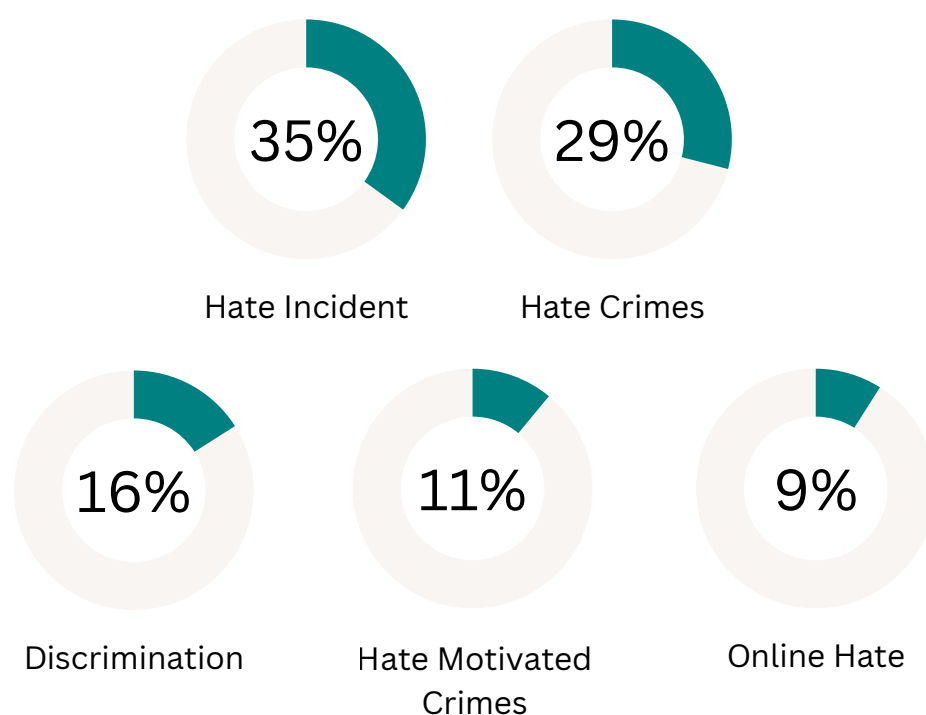
The acts that characterized cases that included female/female-identified victims were most often verbal hate/ harassment (23 cases) and discrimination (19 cases). Further, bullying/intimidation were present in 7 cases, public spreading hate were present in 6 cases, physical assault characterized 3 cases, hateful symbols were found in two cases, and threats of violence characterized 1 case.

Of the 32 cases that included youth under the age of 24 as victims, 11 cases (34%) were classified as hate incidents, 8 cases (25%) were classified as discrimination, 8 cases (25%) were classified as hate crimes, and 5 cases (16%) were classified as hate motivated crimes.



The acts that characterized cases that included youth under the age of 24 as victims were most often verbal hate/ harassment (9 cases) and discrimination (5 cases). Further, bullying/intimidation were present in 2 cases, public spreading of hate was present in 3 cases, physical assault characterized 1 case, hateful symbols were found in 1 case, and threats of violence characterized 2 cases.

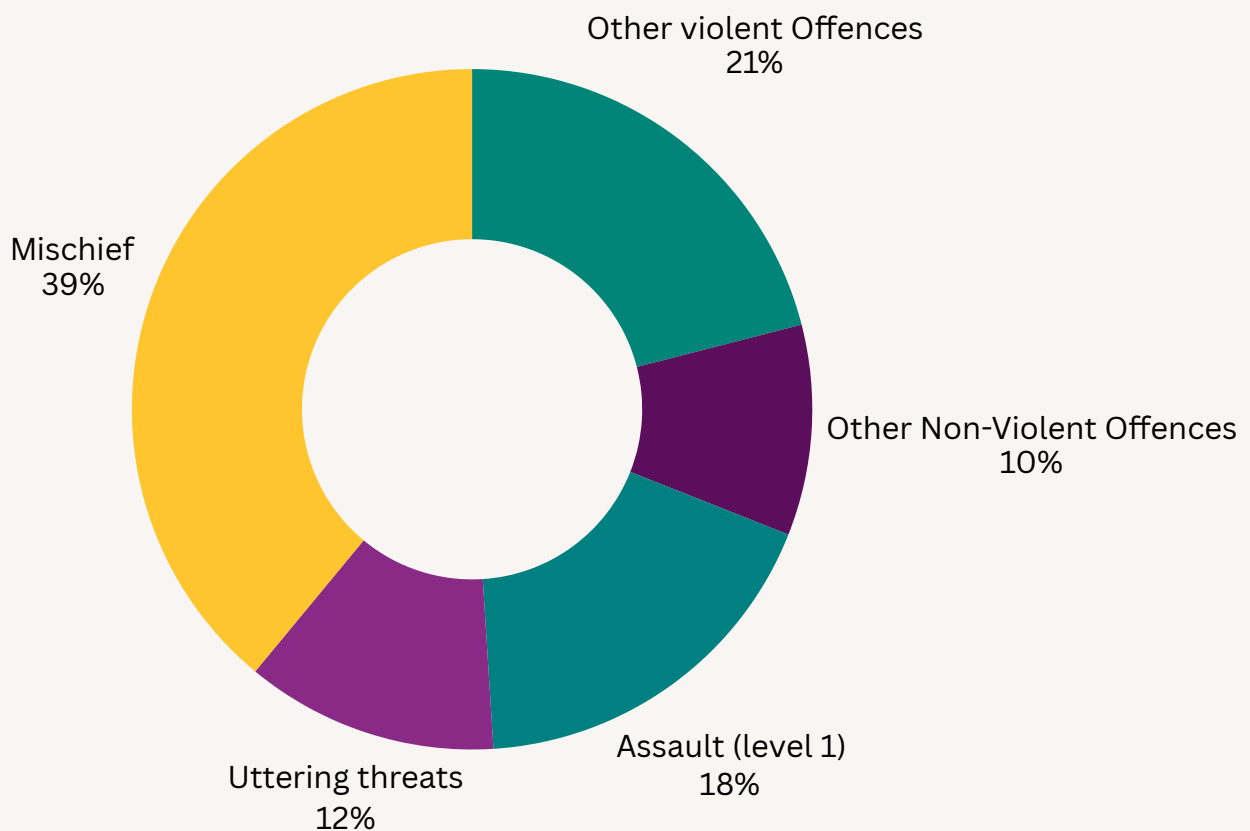
When considering the whole picture of all 159 reports, 56 cases (35%) were classified as hate incidents, 46 cases (29%) were classified as hate crimes, 25 cases (16%) were classified as discrimination, 17 cases (11%) were classified as hate motivated crimes, and 15 cases (9%) were classified as online hate. Of significance is the jump in hate crimes from just 15% of total cases in 2023.



The acts that characterized cases overall were most often verbal hate/ harassment (49 cases), publicly spreading hate against a group (35 cases) and discrimination (33 cases). Further, bullying/intimidation was present in 12 cases, physical assault was present in 7 cases, threats of violence was present in 7 cases, online abuse was present in 6 cases, vandalism was present in 3 cases, and displaying or spreading hateful symbols/ images/ posters/ literature was present in 2 cases.

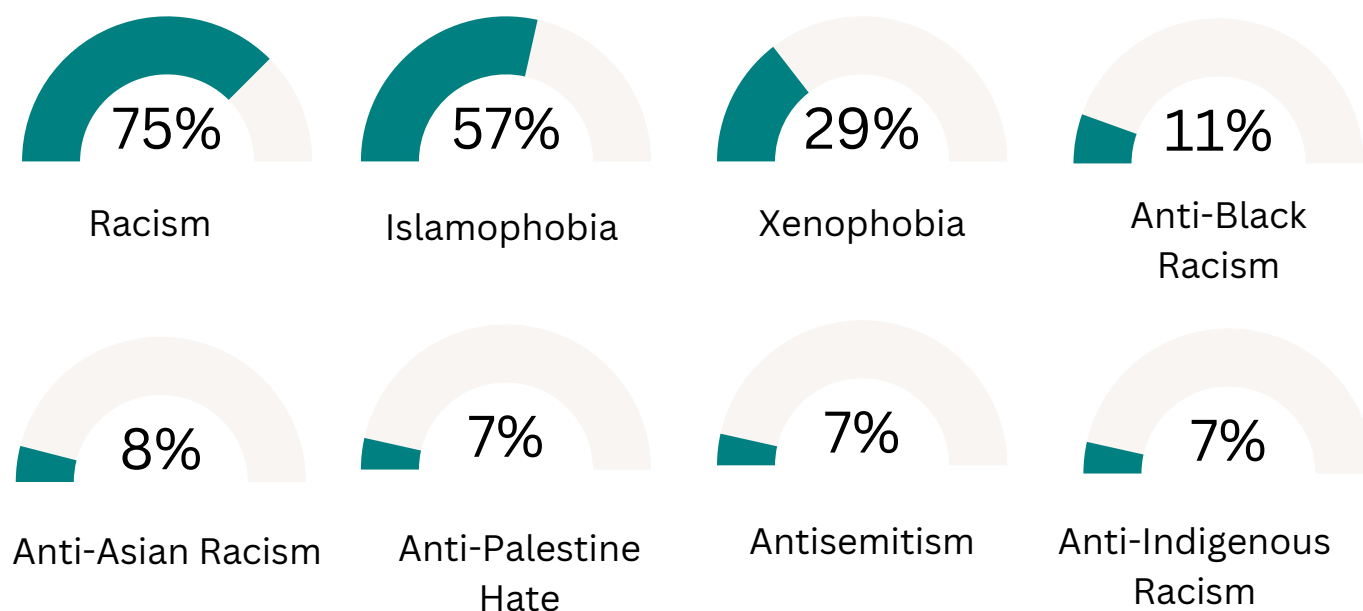
Data collected from Waterloo Region Police Services

According to a memo titled 'Community Safety & Wellbeing: Annual Hate-Motivated Crime Report' authored by the WRPS Community Safety Partnerships there were 237 hate-motivated crimes reported to police in 2024 across Waterloo Region. Despite this decrease of 36%, the majority of reported incidents were violent (51%) demonstrating a change from 2023 in which most incidents were non-violent. In 2024, 39% were Mischief calls for things such as offensive graffiti, while the next most common incident was level 1 assaults with 43 calls.



Reason for incident

Those reporting hate were asked their insights on what the reason was for the incident. In the 61 cases where victims were female/ female-identifying, 46 cases (75%) included racism as the reason for the incident, 35 cases (57%) included Islamophobia, 29 cases (48%) included xenophobia (anti-immigrant hate), 7 cases (11%) identified anti-Black racism and 5 cases (8%) included anti-Asian racism. In addition, antisemitism, transphobia/homophobia, anti-Indigenous, anti-Palestinian hate were also identified.

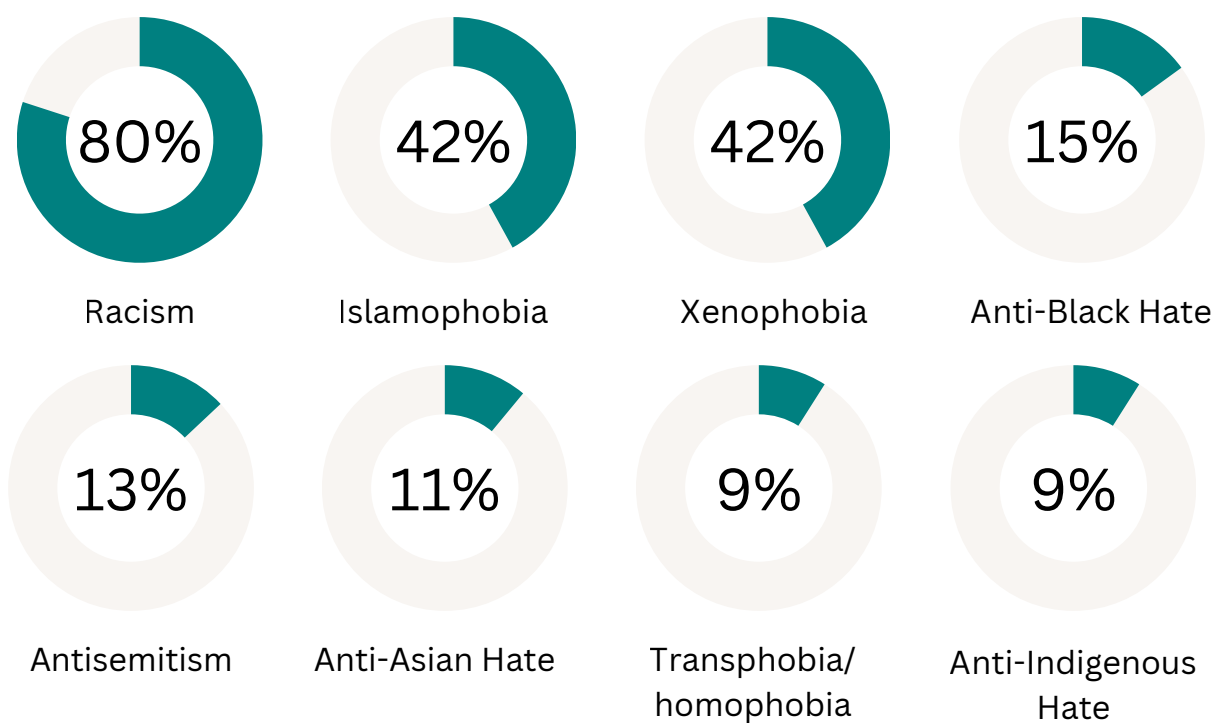


When considering female/ female-identified victims and intersectionality, a total of 45 cases (73%) selected multiple reasons for the incident. A total of 22 cases (36%) included two reasons, in combinations such as: 'Anti-immigrant hate (xenophobia) and anti-Black racism', 'Islamophobia and anti-Palestine racism', and 'racism and Islamophobia'. Further, another 23 cases (38%) included three reasons, with the most common example being, 'Racism, Islamophobia and Xenophobia'.



In the 32 cases where victims were identified as being youth under the age of 24, 23 cases (72%) included racism, 16 cases (26%) included Islamophobia as a reason for the incident, 13 cases (21%) included Xenophobia, and 5 cases (8%) included anti-Black hate. Further, cases of antisemitism, transphobia, and anti-Asian, anti-Indigenous, and anti-Indian racism were reported.

When considering the whole picture of all 159 reports, 127 cases (80%) gave racism as a reason for the incident, 67 cases (42%) gave Islamophobia as a reason, 66 cases (42%) gave anti-immigrant hate (xenophobia), 24 cases (15%) gave anti-Black hate, 21 cases (13%) gave antisemitism, 18 cases (11%) gave anti-Asian hate, 15 cases (9%) gave transphobia and/or homophobia, 14 cases (9%) gave anti-Indigenous hate, 6 cases (4%) gave anti-Palestinian hate, further sexism, ableism, and anti-Indian hate were also named as reasons for the incident.



During an analysis of the data, a trend tying religious or culture specific clothing directly to the victims' experience of hate emerged. Of the 61 reports overall concerning women, 32 (52%) were wearing a hijab or niqab, Keffiyeh, and/or other culturally specific clothing. Often this clothing was mentioned directly, especially in verbal hate/harassment cases. One report stated:

“After participating in a peaceful demonstration in support of the Palestinian people, a woman went grocery shopping. Upon boarding the bus, she encountered a discourteous driver who displayed rudeness towards her because she wore a Keffiyeh. The driver failed to open the ramp for her to disembark easily with her cart and even shouted at her twice.”

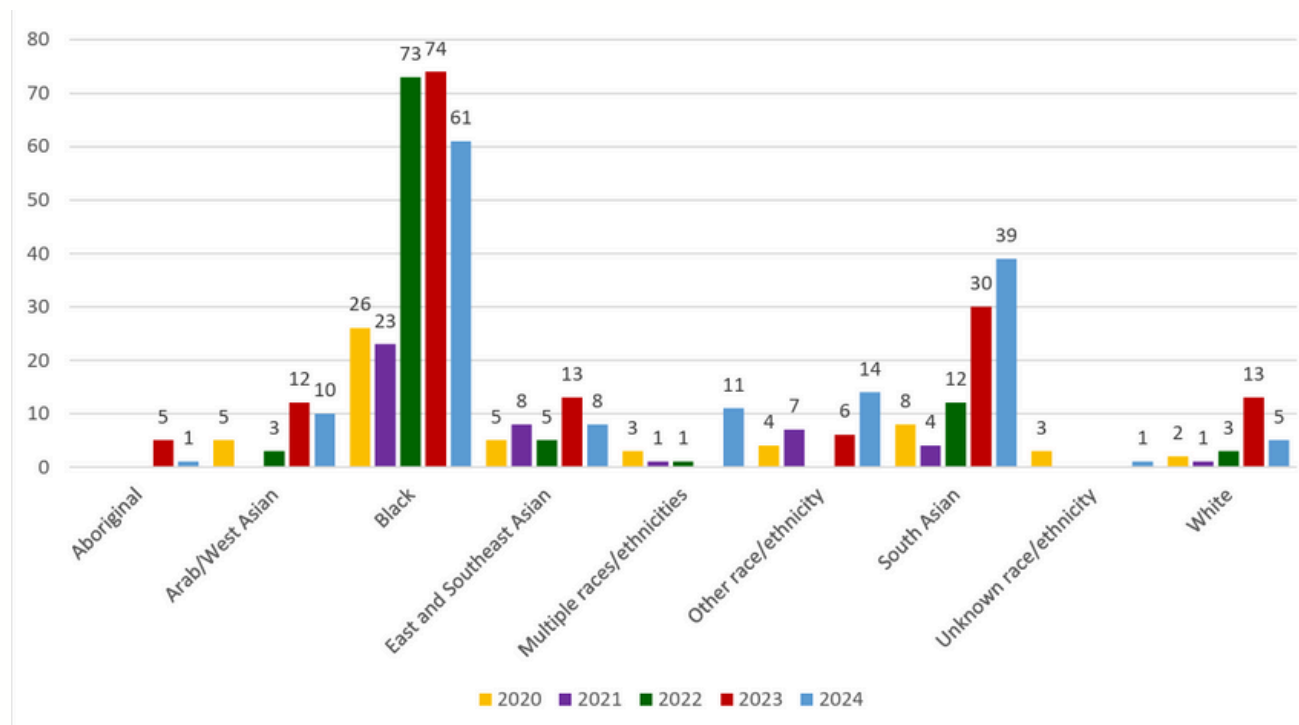
- Reported through AHS



Data collected from Waterloo Region Police Services

In 2024 in Waterloo Region there were 150 race-based hate-motivated crimes reported to police. Hate-motivated crimes most often targeted Black individuals, however, there was an increase 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).

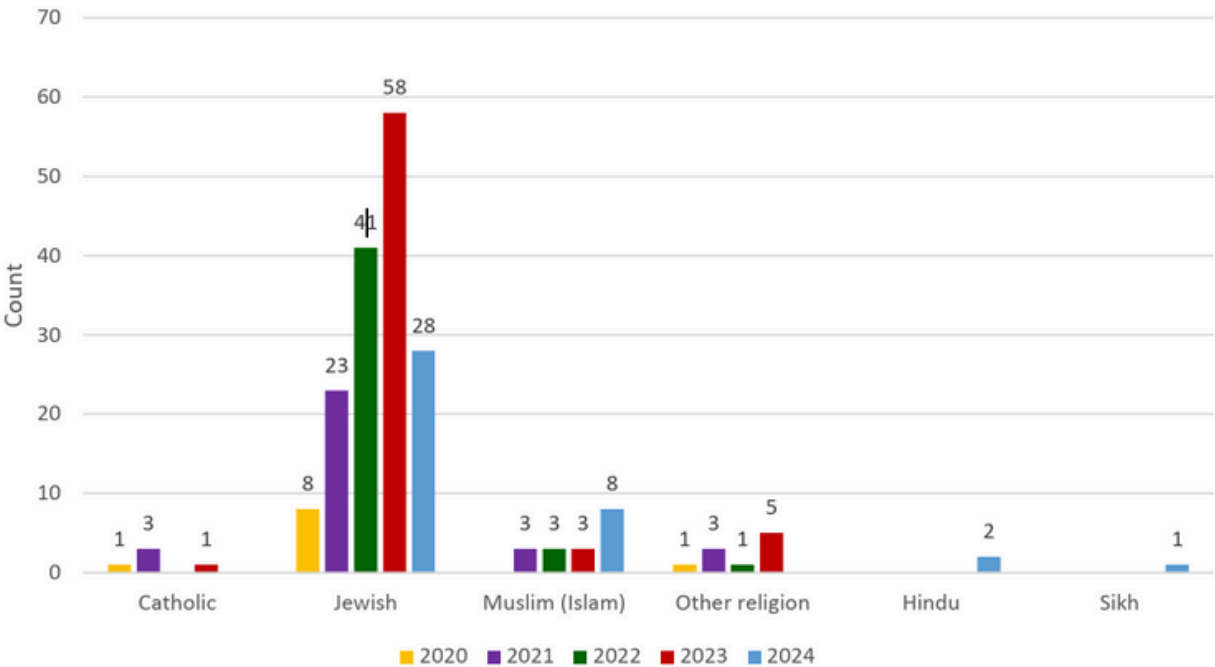
Frequency of Hate-Motivated Crimes on the Basis of Race 2020-2024



Data collected from Waterloo Region Police Services

In 2024, there were 39 hate-motivated crimes targeting religious groups. The vast majority of police-reported hate-motivated crimes targeting religious groups affected Jewish individuals (total of 28 cases). Hate-motivated crimes targeting Muslim individual increased from 3 incidents in 2023 to 8 incidents in 2024.

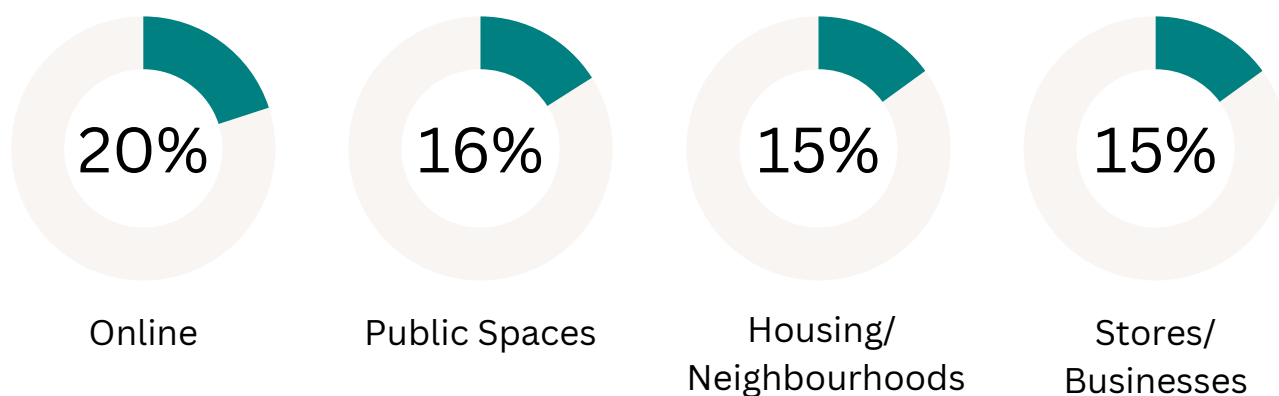
Frequency of Hate-Motivated Crimes on the Basis of Religion 2020-2024



In addition, in 2024, there were 32 hate-motivated crimes targeting individuals based on their sexual orientation. The vast majority of police-reported hate-motivated crimes targeted the overall 2SLGBTQ+ community.

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 online - accounting for 12 cases (20%) - and public spaces such as the park, street or parking lot - accounting for 10 cases (16%). Further, housing and in neighbourhoods accounted for 9 cases (15%), as did stores/businesses.



Looking at the location trends among youth under the age of 24, education settings (college/university and public school/private school) accounted for 10 cases (31%), Online spaces accounted for four cases and housing/neighbourhoods and public spaces each accounted for three cases.

Across all 159 cases, the most reported incidents happened in online spaces, 64 cases (40%). A further 14 cases (9%) happened in education settings. Housing/neighbourhoods and workplaces/employment both accounted for 13 cases (8%), and stores and businesses accounted for 12 cases (7%). Similarly, public spaces accounted for 17 cases (11%). Public transportation accounted for 7 cases (4%), public services (including healthcare) accounted for six cases (4%) and the remaining cases chose not to identify or identified as 'other.'

Housing/Neighbourhood Spaces- (13 cases)

A total of 13 incidents happened in housing/neighbourhood spaces.

- 70% of these cases included female/female-identified victims and 23% of cases included youth under the age of 24.
- Housing/neighbourhood spaces predominantly reflected instances of racism, Islamophobia, and anti-immigrant hate.
- In this setting, it was most common for hate-motivated crimes (4 cases) to be reported followed by hate incidents (4 cases), and hate crimes (3 cases).
- Among the behaviours and actions reported most frequently included: physical assault (3 cases), verbal hate and harassment (3 cases), and discrimination (3 cases). Further, three cases of vandalism (including theft) were reported.

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 escalating from verbal hate and harassment to physical assault :

“This neighbour, as I said, who identified as a white presenting woman, repeatedly splashed water on us for more than five times. I have an eyewitness for this. I asked this woman why she had splashed water on us. She angrily responded to me that we are Canadian and said to us you should speak in Canadian Language. We are Ethiopian-Canadian people who spoke one of the Ethiopian languages at that time. I told her she had no right to do this to us and that it was a form of racism and violation. I called 911 at the time, but the call went to voice message... I need help to stop this woman from violating my rights. Thank you so much.”

- Reported through AHS



Often in housing environments, there was more intense support needed, particularly for organizing and/or exploring reporting and legal services:

“These incidents have caused significant distress and fear among our community members. We have submitted the footage to the police. However, we have been informed by the authorities that they are unable to take any action due to the age of the perpetrators. This response has been deeply disappointing and leaves us feeling unsupported and vulnerable. While we understand the complexities involved with handling cases involving minors, the ongoing nature of these attacks and the targeted racial abuse necessitate a more proactive approach to ensure the safety and well-being of our community.”

- Reported through AHS

- Reported through AHS

Public Spaces- (17 cases)

A total of 17 incidents happened in public spaces (like parking lots, parks, and on the street).

- 47% of these cases included female/female-identified victims, 18% of cases included youth under the age of 24, and a further 18% were groups/communities that were targeted.
- Public spaces predominantly reflected instances of racism (including three instances of anti-Black racism and one case of anti-Asian racism), anti-immigrant hate and Islamophobia.
- In this setting, it was most common for hate incidents to be reported (13 cases), followed by hate crimes (2 cases) and hate-motivated crimes (2 cases).
- Among the behaviours and actions reported most frequently included: verbal hate and harassment (13 cases), publicly displaying or spreading hate (2 cases), as well as one case each of vandalism and physical assault.

“I was in uptown waterloo when a group of boys drove past with the windows down so they could yell the n-word at me.”

- Reported through AHS

“I was going for a walk in the evening. This woman gives me the middle finger with both her hands. I haven't recorded anything yet. I try to engage in dialogue for a couple of minutes to help her understand that I mean no harm to her and help her understand that it's not cool to be racist. She didn't want to engage with me in any logical level. She started yelling at me to go back, and that's when I started recording and asking her where should I go back.”

- Reported through AHS

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

“We were in our car close to the traffic circle. There was another car in the lane adjacent to ours, the driver started at us for a few seconds than spitted towards us with full force and then sped the car and drove away. He was about 30-49 year old, while male.”

- Reported through AHS

Education Settings- (14 cases)

A total of 14 incidents happened in education settings.

- 28% of these cases included female/female-identified victims, 71% of cases included youth under the age of 24, and a further 14% were groups/communities that were targeted.
- Education settings predominantly reflected instances of racism and Islamophobia.
- In this setting, it was most common for discrimination to be reported (6 cases), followed by hate crimes (3 cases) and hate incidents (2 cases).
- Among the behaviours and actions reported most frequently included: discrimination (6 cases), publicly displaying or spreading hate (3 cases), verbal hate and harassment (1 case), and vandalism (1 case).

“My kids are young, so they don't feel it, but if this attitude continues and my kids start noticing it, how can they feel that our move to Canada is safe for their mental health?”

- Reported through AHS

Stores and Private Business - (11 cases)

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

“... the person behind me started making Islamophobic comments. Feeling uncomfortable, I decided to leave the store without buying anything.”

- Reported through AHS

Workplaces - (11 cases)

A total of eleven incidents were documented that happened in workplaces. In this setting, it was most common for hate incidents to be reported (five cases), followed by discrimination (three cases), hate crimes (two cases), and hate-motivated crime (one case). Among the behaviours and actions reported include: discrimination, bullying/intimidation, physical assault, verbal hate/harassment, publicly spreading hate against a group, and displaying hateful symbols/images. Those reporting hate shared some of their struggles:

“When I attempted to bring up... micro-aggression and racism at work... I was bullied and treated like a trouble maker.”

- Reported through AHS

Public Transit - (6 cases)

A total of six incidents were documented through AHS that happened on public transit. In this setting, discrimination (two cases) and hate incidents (two cases) were most commonly reported.

Emerging findings from research led by professor, Pamela Johnson, at Conestoga College contextualize this experience for us. Surveys and focus groups captured over 300 newcomer students' experiences using Brantford Transit and Grand River Transit, with many sharing experiences of hate on public transit including racism, Islamophobia, verbal hate, intimidation, and discrimination. While pathways to reporting these experiences may exist, newcomer students' faced barriers that affected their ability or willingness to report, such as language differences, distrust in or not knowing reporting processes, and fear of possible backlash. Students who did report their experience to the transit provider either did not receive follow-up or did not feel like the issue was addressed appropriately.

Online Spaces (65 cases)

Of the 159 incidents reported through AHS, 65 incidents happened in online environments (either fully, or to a great degree) - marking a large increase from the 2023's 16 cases. The majority of cases involved reporting online hate from a specific social media account or an individual's behaviour across social media platforms (22%):

"This account is spreading hate and racism. These kind of accounts puts us minority under hate crime and risk of livelihood free from hate crime." - Reported through AHS

Many cases reported a hateful post (17%) or comment (9%) on social media:

“On a tiktok post, I had someone claim I wasn't disabled, and continued to think I was faking. He then made fun of my weight and hinted at my sexual orientation and gender identity. I informed them of the mental health status I was in and the he was making it worse, he continued.”

- Reported through AHS

While 12% of online hate cases related to behaviour in online groups:

“A member of the Indian community reached out to CMW's Anti-Hate Services (AHS) and mentioned a concern about a Facebook group called Food in the Waterloo Region. He shared that his friend had posted and the post received comments where community members began sharing racial slurs about Hindustan and Indian people, including remarks suggesting that "they should all go back to India.”

- Reported through AHS

Another 12% of individuals reported direct messages were used to personally target, attack and intimidate people:

“They messaged me on Facebook about a Facebook market place ad and when I left the group as I was not interested in doing business with them they sent me a long message using homophobic/racial slurs.”

- Reported through AHS

14% of cases reported hate content on publicly available websites, with other cases of online hate occurring over online gaming, online forums, and in video call technology.

23% of online cases included male/male-identified victims, with another 18% experienced by female/female-identified victims. However, the majority of online hate (48%) targeted groups/communities.

Regarding the age of victims, most reports involving a single victim included adults between the age of 31-40 years old (15%). 3 cases included youth under the age of 24.

“The statements made... on social media represent a clear example of hate speech, anti-Semitic rhetoric, and dangerous extremist views. Such rhetoric not only violates ethical standards but also poses significant risks to society.

- Reported through AHS

In this setting, it was most common for hate crimes to be reported (27 cases), followed by hate incidents (15 cases) and online hate (14 cases). Among the behaviours and actions reported most frequently included: publicly spreading hate against a group (24 cases), verbal hate and harassment (18 cases), and discrimination (12 cases). Online cases predominantly reflected instances of racism (72%), anti-immigrant hate (37%), Islamophobia (32%) and antisemitism (28%).

The majority of online reports were associated with Ontario (62%) - 9 in the Greater Toronto Area, 3 in Eastern Ontario, and 17 in Southwestern Ontario. Of the latter, 13 online hate incidents were reported from or related to Waterloo Region.

However, reports related to or occurring from five additional provinces and two territories demonstrated the national reach of the Reporting Hate website. Reports were also received from or associated with online hate occurring in British Columbia (11%), Quebec (9%), Alberta (8%), as well as Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Northwestern Territories and Yukon.



SECTION 5

Next Steps



NEXT STEPS

The 2024 Anti-Hate Report offers a powerful reflection of the challenges faced by many individuals and communities across Waterloo Region. The 38% increase in reported hate incidents is deeply concerning and reminds us that hate continues to show up in both familiar and emerging spaces—especially online, in schools, neighbourhoods, and workplaces.

This year's report highlights how certain groups, particularly racialized women and youth, are disproportionately affected by hate, discrimination, and exclusion. Yet, it also tells a story of strength. The individuals who shared their experiences did so with courage and a hope for change. Their voices remind us that the simple act of being heard can be a first step toward healing and justice.

Community-based supports like the Anti-Hate Services (AHS) program are vital, not only for those directly affected, but for the broader goal of creating safer, more inclusive communities. This work cannot be done alone—it requires all of us, in every role we hold, to come together in response. As we move forward together, we invite everyone to be part of the solution by taking the time to learn, listen and speak up when you see harm. You can help by creating spaces where people feel safe, valued and equity is the norm and by equipping yourself and others with the tools to understand and address bias and discrimination.

For our community decision makers, institutions and policy makers we urge you to continue to invest in community-led initiatives and explore ways to remove barriers to seeking support or reporting hate for people in our community, whether experienced in person or virtually. Within this, there is a need to build trust through transparency, empathy and partnership with affected communities.

This report is not only a record of challenges, it is an invitation to grow together. Through education, connection, and action, we can help ensure that everyone in our region feels safe, seen, and supported.

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



Report Hate