



The Regional Municipality of York Police Service Board

Public Board Meeting
April 23, 2025
For Information

Report of the Chief of Police

Annual Report on Hate Crime Policy

1. Recommendation

That the Board receive this report for information.

2. Purpose

York Region is home to many diverse communities and promotes inclusion amongst its nine municipalities. This makes our Region a desirable place to live for our current residents, new Canadians and those who seek a higher standard of living. We are constantly adapting to the evolving requirements of policing within the fast-growing communities.

York Regional Police (YRP) is committed to developing an organization that is culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of the community.

The Board and YRP are committed to the creation of a Region where all stakeholders live, work and play without fear of hate, bias or prejudice. This is based on the protected grounds, or any other similar factor, under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Board Policy #04/03 requires an annual report from the Chief of Police on the impact and effectiveness of the YRP Hate Crime Policy. This report provides statistical data about criminal offences and non-criminal incidents committed against persons or property which are motivated by bias or prejudice. It also includes strategies and prevention methods to address hate crimes or hate/bias incidents.

A summary of these strategies by York Regional Police Hate Crime Prevention Unit (HCPU) are outlined below:

Proactive Community Engagement

- HCPU strategically engages with communities most impacted by global events, offering tailored support services, public safety information, and collaborative solutions to mitigate the local effects of hate-motivated incidents.

Education and Awareness Initiatives

- HCPU delivers structured educational programs to both community members and YRP personnel, promoting awareness, prevention, and response strategies through in-person sessions, digital platforms, and collaborative workshops.

Culturally Responsive Policing

- YRP is committed to fostering an inclusive and culturally responsive police service that recognizes and addresses the diverse needs of York Region's communities through informed policies and training.

Enhanced Hate Crime Reporting and Community Trust

- HCPU strengthens public confidence by implementing innovative reporting mechanisms, expanding outreach efforts, and fostering strategic partnerships with cultural and religious organizations to encourage hate crime and hate incident reporting.

Specialized Investigative Response

- HCPU is a dedicated investigative team that prioritizes hate-motivated incidents, aligning its investigative processes with the 17 protected grounds under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* to ensure a thorough and consistent response.

Focused Hate Crime Enforcement

- HCPU leads investigations into hate propaganda offences, including advocating genocide, willful promotion of hate, willful promotion of anti-Semitism, and incitement of hatred. These cases involve complex legal processes, requiring Attorney General consultations and consent for prosecution.

Data-Driven Insights and Transparency

- Utilizing the Business Intelligence Tool, HCPU enhances transparency through a Hate Crime Dashboard, providing real-time data on hate crime trends, incident locations, and YRP's investigative responses to support informed community engagement.

Integrated Investigative Support and Victim Assistance

- HCPU collaborates with divisional and centralized YRP units to provide comprehensive investigative support for hate crimes and hate/bias incidents while ensuring victim-centered assistance to affected individuals and communities.

Inter-Agency Collaboration and Training

- HCPU partners with law enforcement agencies across Ontario and Canada, including the Hate Crime and Extremism Investigative Team (HCEIT), to exchange intelligence, conduct joint investigations, and deliver specialized training on emerging hate crime trends.

3. Background

YRP is one of the leading police agencies that incorporates the principles of policing with a global mindset and policing through the lens of human rights. Our strategy highlights the fundamental framework for peaceful coexistence and harmony. Cognisant of the effect of global events, HCPU also recognizes it is incumbent upon its own membership to stay abreast of the real time impact of world events on our local communities. HCPU is dedicated to ensuring all of our communities the protection of rights and freedoms outlined in our Charter. Our mission involves building meaningful partnerships and consistently engaging with community stakeholders locally, particularly those most affected by global events.

YRP understands the repercussions of global events and the impact they have on Canadian society. It is imperative that HCPU works under the umbrella of the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Bureau (DEIB) to build and refine relationships with all communities. This approach is relatively unique because it enables direct networking and communication with at risk groups and community members, including youth and vulnerable populations. By fostering these connections, it provides a deeper understanding of their experiences and a broader perspective on the challenges they face.

Community Engagement

In fostering a safe, welcoming and inclusive community, HCPU engages in community events to understand, honour and celebrate the many attributes of human diversity within the region. By leveraging this knowledge, HCPU along with the DEIB operationally and effectively respond to hate crimes and hate/bias incidents.

We continue to engage with our communities and strengthen our relationships by pursuing positive partnerships with our stakeholders and advocacy/support groups. HCPU also engages its internal YRP members and the community in hate crime prevention programs through initiatives, promoting the principles of human rights, diversity, equity and inclusion.

4. Analysis

GLOBAL EVENTS

Global events contributed to the rise in hate crime and hate/bias incidents that directly impacts our diverse communities. Post October 7, 2023 – Israel v. Hamas conflict resulted in an increase in hate crime reporting under the Religion category, where the Jewish and Muslim communities were affected. While the Black, Arab, Asian and South-Asian groups

under the Race/ Ethnicity category remain the most impacted communities, due to a rise in anti-immigration sentiments in Canada.

Based on the 2024 statistics, incidents targeting race/ethnicity and religion decreased compared to 2023. This decline reflects YRP's organizational response to hate crime, increased community awareness, and strengthened partnerships that support public education across the Region.

In accordance with YRP's mandate, HCPU is actively involved in hate crime and hate-motivated investigations, ensuring a proactive and intelligence-led response to emerging threats. HCPU goes beyond traditional investigative work by proactively identifying and analyzing hate-related trends before they escalate to larger threats. Through intelligence-led policing, we engage with at risk communities, monitor online activities and work closely with our partner agencies to track and prevent hate-motivated incidents.

HCPU maintains a focus on global events that may impact the York Region community and integrates these considerations into its proactive strategies. This includes, but is not limited to, the Israel-Hamas war, the Ukraine-Russia war, rising incidents of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the Iranian human rights struggles.

In response to the October 7, 2023 attack and its ongoing impact, HCPU has strengthened its support for Muslim, Jewish, and other affected communities by fostering partnerships that enhance YRP's ability to address hate-related incidents. Through collaboration with community leaders and organizations, HCPU ensures a more informed and coordinated approach, addressing concerns, providing resources, and reinforcing YRP's commitment to public safety and inclusion.

Hate Crime and Hate Incidents

YRP captures crime statistics data using an incident based Uniform Crime Reporting survey methodology developed by the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, a division of Statistics Canada in collaboration with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. Since 2005, Statistics Canada has collected data on hate crimes according to this standard. YRP diligently captures hate/bias incidents and hate crimes to ensure the data reported is of the highest accuracy. The reporting of hate crime and hate/bias incidents is crucial in identifying hate crime trends, hate crime groups and any new and upcoming movements or ideologies that may be concerning.

YRP encourages the reporting of hate crime and hate/bias incidents by focusing on prevention, education and social cohesion. YRP also continues to promote new and connective ways for our residents to report hate crime and hate incidents. Such as a collaborative partnership with the Region of York - Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group (MDIG) in promoting community awareness and increase in reporting campaign. Additionally, partnering with Immigration Welcome Centres, HCPU has educated and informed newcomers to Canada about hate crimes and hate/bias incidents and guided them on how to report their experiences to police.

See the attachments for a breakdown of 2024, as well as a three-year comparison starting from 2022:

- Table 1: Hate Crime Incidents by Primary Motivations, 2022-2024
- Table 2: Hate Crime Incidents by Most Serious Violation, 2022-2024
- Table 3: Non-criminal Hate Incidents by Primary Motivations, 2022-2024
- Table 4: Non-criminal Hate Incidents by Most Serious Violation, 2022-2024

Hate Crime Prevention Strategy Approaches

HCPU places the safety of our vulnerable communities at the top of our priorities at this time of unprecedented global conflict escalation. It utilizes a collaborative approach in working with internal and external partners within our Region to address hate crimes and hate/bias incidents with a deeper understanding of cultural sensitivities. As a result, HCPU recognizes that there is still an existing gap between actual events and the rate of reporting. HCPU actively engages its members and community in hate crime prevention programs and initiatives. These initiatives include:

- Community workshops – educating community members about identifying and reporting hate crimes
- Awareness campaigns – utilizing social media, posters and community events to spread awareness
- Support groups – establishing support groups for victims of hate crimes, providing a safe space to share experiences and access resources
- Police-community dialogues – facilitating regular meetings between law enforcement and community members to discuss concerns, share information and build trust

These initiatives provide an opportunity for prevention and education before an incident reaches the point of criminality.

To foster innovation in our approach, we have implemented the following initiatives:

- The 2024 Hate Crime Conference, hosted by HCPU at the YRPA building, welcomed approximately 140 attendees from police services nationwide, including Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams (INSETs), Public Safety, Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), and other agencies. The event expanded to include corrections and by-law officers within York Region.

The four-day conference focused on hate crime investigative techniques and case studies, fostering collaboration and best practices. Recognized as a premier North American event, the YRP Hate Crime Conference provides a comprehensive training platform for experts and participants across Canada.

- Strengthened partnerships and expanded programs with Immigrant Welcome Centres across York Region. HCPU has provided numerous presentations to newcomers, educating them on hate crimes and bias incidents; how to report these incidents to the police; and addressing common misconceptions they may have as new residents. Topics covered included: First Responders Week, defining hate crimes with real-world examples, reporting procedures with clear guidance, understanding cultural diversity in a global community, available community support resources, and fostering safer, more inclusive communities.
- The HCPU remains committed to ongoing community support through meaningful engagement and collaboration with diverse communities. By actively participating in initiatives such as Black History Month, the SANKOFA Program, PRIDE, Interfaith Councils, and Asian Heritage Month, amongst other critical partnerships, the unit fosters trust, understanding, and open dialogue. These efforts not only strengthen relationships but also reinforce the unit's dedication to education, awareness, and proactive strategies in addressing hate-motivated incidents. Through continued outreach and partnerships, the Hate Crime Unit ensures that all communities feel heard, supported, and protected.
- HCPU is committed to providing awareness and education about hate crimes and hate/bias incidents to our new officers. In collaboration with the Training and Education Bureau, HCPU delivers on-going presentations and best practices to new recruits, such as how to effectively investigate, capture and report hateful incidents.
- In light of the hate crime incidents targeting the Muslim and Jewish communities, Family Muslim Faith and Family Jewish Faith Days were hosted by DEIB at the Community Safety Village to support and confirm YRP's commitment to investigating these incidents. More than 1000 people from both communities attended these events, held on two separate days. Building partnerships with these communities to address concerns about the increase in hate crimes while espousing hate crime prevention and reporting practices.
- HCPU provided an on-line hate crime presentation for approximately 100 CBSA officers throughout the province of Ontario. Topics included information about the differences between hate crime and hate/bias incidents, hate propaganda, hateful symbols and ideologies that may be distributed from other countries and the impact of global events within Canada.
- Hate Crime presentation was provided to approximately 50 Senior Management members of the Region of York at York Region Administrative Centre located at 17250 Yonge Street, with a focus on hate within our communities, best reporting practices and assistance to community members victimized by hateful acts.
- The Human Rights Education Classroom (HREC) was proudly displayed during the Human Rights event hosted by DEIB at the Community Safety Village in collaboration with community partners, Youth for Human Rights International. The focus of this year's event was 'Youth Bringing Life to Human Rights', celebrating the achievements of younger members of the community. Approximately 100 attendees were present at

this important event. There was profound impact on the community, by empowering youth to take an active role in promoting human rights. It highlighted their achievements and fosters a sense of inclusivity and respect. This had built stronger relationships between youth and community leaders, creating a more cohesive and supportive environment.

- Command posts set up in high visibility locations within the Region for October 7 anniversary date, in light of the Israel-Hamas conflict. HCPU took the lead role in setting up these command posts to deter any hate crimes targeting Jewish and Muslim places of worship or businesses. By taking the lead, HCPU ensured that these posts were staffed and effectively managed. The involvement of HCPU was crucial in interacting with the public, overseeing the operations of the command posts and maintaining a reassuring presence over the two weeks of the anniversary date. This proactive approach helped foster a sense of safety and support within both communities.
- In 2025, HCPU will expand to include five dedicated Hate Crime investigators and two detectives in total, doubling the size of the Unit. This growth will significantly enhance the Unit's capacity to address all hate-motivated crimes within the Region. With five dedicated investigators and two detectives, the Unit will ensure that each incident is thoroughly reviewed, investigated, and prosecuted by officers with specialized expertise. This expansion highlights YRP's strong commitment to combating hate crimes, demonstrating the robust support from the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). Their dedication to this initiative ensures the Region remains proactive in preventing and addressing hate-motivated incidents.
- HCPU investigators receive specialized training in hate crime investigations and cultural competencies. This training enhances their understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds, improving their ability to interact with and support victims. They are also trained to detect and investigate hate crimes occurring in on-line spaces. Additionally, seminars and workshops hosted by advocacy and community groups offer valuable insights into complex issues within each community, further equipping investigators with the knowledge they need. For example, Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre (FSWC), Anti-Defamation League (New York City), Islamophobia, Indigenous and Black History training.

5. Financial Considerations

Not applicable.

6. Local Impact

Hate crimes have profound impacts that reverberate through individuals, their communities, and society in general. Beyond the immediate physical and psychological harm inflicted on victims, hate crimes create fear, distrust and division within communities. YRP HCPU recognizes the pervasive and enduring impacts of hate crimes and works toward fostering

inclusive and respectful communities where all individuals feel safe and valued. Through partnerships with local organizations, HCPU works to build trust and promote unity.

Additionally, the Unit collaborates with businesses and community groups to create a network of support and prevention, helping ensure that all individuals feel safe and valued. This comprehensive approach helps to mitigate the local impacts of hate crimes.

7. Conclusion

The data collected and analyzed on hate crimes within our jurisdiction underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive, proactive response. Our findings reveal not only the increasing frequency of incidents but also the importance of strengthening community partnerships to prevent, educate on and address hate, bias, and prejudice. The Board and York Regional Police are firmly committed to creating a region where all stakeholders can live, work, and play without fear of discrimination, in alignment with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. This commitment extends to fostering an inclusive environment where diversity is respected and everyone is protected from prejudice.

The expansion of the specialized Hate Crime Unit, which will include the addition of three dedicated investigators and one detective in 2025, will be crucial in ensuring that we have the necessary resources to respond effectively. This strengthened team will not only enhance investigative capacity but also deepen our intelligence-driven approach, supported by close collaboration with community partners. By analyzing data and using advanced analytics and data collection methods to identify patterns and trends in hate crime activities, HCPU can proactively identify potential hotspots, allocate resources effectively and tailor prevention strategies. This integrated effort will ensure our focus remains on supporting victims, building trust within the community, and addressing the root causes of hate-motivated crimes.

By working closely with local organizations and the Intelligence Unit, we will implement strategies that blend prevention, enforcement, and education. Our goal is to promote a culture of inclusivity and accountability, and create safer spaces for all individuals within our region.

In moving forward, our commitment to community partnerships, alongside the expansion of our Hate Crime Unit, will ensure a unified and comprehensive approach to combating hate crime and reinforcing our vision of a community free of hate, bias, and prejudice. By enhancing our investigative capabilities and fostering strong relationships with local organizations, we aim to swiftly and effectively respond to incidents through proactive education and outreach.

YRP continues to convey strong messaging to its members encouraging respectful and professional approaches in dealing with communities affected by global conflict, with a long-term objective of ensuring the safety and security of all our residents.

Alternative formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Approved for Submission: Jim MacSween, M.O.M., B.A.A.
Chief of Police

Attachments:(1) Table 1: Hate Crime Incidents by Primary Motivations, 2022-2024
(2) Table 2: Hate Crime Incidents by Most Serious Violation, 2022-2024
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