

**PUBLIC**

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK  
POLICE SERVICES BOARD

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

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**Hate Crime Update Report in Relation to COVID-19 Related Incidents**

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**RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the Board receive this report pursuant to Policy No. 04/03.

**SYNOPSIS**

This report provides an overview of hate crime and hate crime prevention strategies in relation to COVID-19 and its impact on East and Southeast Asian communities in York Region.

Board Policy No. 04/03 requires an annual report from the Chief on the impact and effectiveness of this policy.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

**BACKGROUND**

The Regional Municipality of York is one of the most diverse regions in Canada. The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board (the "Board") is committed to developing an organization that is culturally sensitive and responsive to the diversity of the citizens of the Region. The Board is committed to ensuring that:

- The Board and York Regional Police provide services in partnership with all the communities of the Region in a manner that is welcoming and inclusive; and
- The Board and York Regional Police are committed to the creation of a region where all stakeholders live, work and play without fear of hate, bias or prejudice, based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, creed, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

The York Regional Police Hate Crime Prevention Unit (YRP-HCPU) is constantly monitoring global events, recognizing that those events can potentially impact the York Region community causing rippling effects locally. This strategic approach allows for better understanding and consideration in order to select the most appropriate responses when addressing the needs and concerns of the community.

In light of the COVID-19 global pandemic, York Region has seen a notable increase in hate crime and hate incidents particularly against community members of Asian descent. The YRP-HCPU has been actively monitoring these incidents related to COVID-19. Whether direct or indirect, Chinese communities in the region have collectively felt the negative impact of feeling unwelcomed by the perpetrators of this intolerance and hate.

From January 2020 to this current reporting period, the YRP-HCPU have recorded nine hate crimes occurrences and nine hate incidents in the form of uttering threats, mischief, causing a disturbance and assault. In comparison to hate crime occurrences against East and South East Asian communities in the previous two years, both the 2018 and 2019 year end numbers reveal eight occurrences each per year against this identifiable group.

Although York Regional Police encourages the reporting of hate crime and hate incidents, there remain members of the community who are reluctant to file reports. This contributes to under-reporting and impacts the actual numbers indicated. It is recognized that all of the victims of COVID-19 hate have backgrounds with an intersectionality of Asian descent. This trend of hate crime and hate incidents has also led to community tensions, anxiety and intra-group conflict spawned by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

## **COVID-19 ANTI-HATE PROACTIVE STRATEGIES**

The YRP-HCPU serves as the operational arm of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Bureau (DEIB), where it supports community resilience through actionable procedures and directives. Some proactive measures YRP-HCPU have undertaken include:

- Anti-hate community education initiatives;
- Monitoring of social media for education and correcting misinformation;
- Providing messaging through ethnic media and Chinese radio programs;
- Encouraging the reporting of hate crime and hate incidents;
- Collaborating with the Strategic Intelligence Unit in monitoring hate and its many manifestations;
- Holding anti-hate youth engagement workshops at the Community Safety Village of York Region;
- Engaging with the Provincial Hate Crime / Extremism Investigative Team (HCEIT) and sharing of best practices in hate prevention;
- Internal messaging to frontline York Regional Police members and investigators;
- Raising awareness with community partners, business partners and non-profits through anti-hate education initiative; and

- Leading a provincial Hate Crime Awareness Conference (September 28, 2020 – October 2, 2020), including presentations from the Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic on the community experiences and impacts of COVID-19 related hate.

## **CONCLUSION**

The YRP-HCPU continues with enhanced community engagement in communities victimized by COVID-19 intolerance and hate while simultaneously exploring and nurturing all opportunities to build community resilience, well-being and social cohesion for peaceful co-existence for communities in York Region.

Jim MacSween, B.A.A.  
Chief of Police

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request