

The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board

Public Board Meeting
April 27, 2022

Report of the Chief of Police

Report on Hate Crime Policy

1. Recommendation

That the Board receive this annual report for information.

2. Summary

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 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.

Board Policy #04/03 requires an annual report from the Chief of Police on the impact and effectiveness of the Hate Crime Policy. This report provides statistical data about criminal and non-criminal offences committed against persons or property which are motivated by

bias or prejudice against sex/gender, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender orientation or expression, or on any other similar factor within York Region. It also includes strategies and prevention methods to address hate crimes and hate/bias incidents.

- York Regional Police is committed to advancing an organization that is culturally sensitive and responsive to the diversity of its citizens within the Region
- York Regional Police's Hate Crime Prevention Unit (HCPU) engages its members and community in hate crime prevention programs and initiatives in support of promoting the principles of human rights, diversity, equity and inclusion
- HCPU has developed innovative methods to encourage the reporting of hate motivated occurrences. These methods include a variety of community engagements, partnership and education initiatives with diverse cultural and religious organizations, and community members, as outlined below

3. Background

HATE CRIME PREVENTION UNIT

There has been a stark increase in hate incidents in 2021, not only in York Region but throughout Canada. The increase is clearly attributed to global events which include but are not limited to: the COVID-19 pandemic; the Palestine/Israeli conflict; the resurgence of Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism; Islamophobia; the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter Movement; the Afghan refugee displacement; the inquiry into the Residential School system as directed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; the Truckers Convoy; the increase in alt-right ideologies; and the history of oppression experienced by multiple identifiable groups.

The current trend indicates that society's tolerance level has decreased towards social injustice and discrimination. Canadians are becoming more educated and aware of inequalities within communities and the fundamentals of Human Rights. There have been more inquiries in regards to historical events, questioning the actions of our ancestors and government authorities, causing an up-rise movement and demand for change.

The York Regional Police HCPU 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. It allows for sensitivity and deeper understanding of different perspectives. It involves direct networking with at-risk groups including cultural, religious, ethnic, youth, 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous and newcomer communities, to safeguard against hate crime victimization.

Community Empowerment

York Regional Police recognizes the devastating impacts of hate crime on a particular community. Our agency's approach involves combining the HCPU within the Diversity, Equity

and Inclusion Bureau (DEIB), in an effort to ensure all manners of cultural concern are addressed.

We continue to empower communities and strengthen our relationship by pursuing positive alliances with members and advocacy groups. The HCPU engages in community events allowing members of the community to experience a personal interaction and connection. This unique practice promotes cohesiveness between our officers and the community they serve, including increasing cultural competencies, therefore, developing open lines of communication before crises arise. The goal of York Regional Police is to truly enhance the quality of life for our communities and to ensure we create a sense of belonging for each and every resident.

4. Analysis

HATE CRIME AND HATE INCIDENTS

The reporting of hate crime continues to be a challenge for many members of our community due to fear of victimization, retaliation, culture, language barriers and uncertainty with the justice system. York Regional Police encourages the reporting of hate crime and are proactive with efforts focused on prevention, education, social cohesion and overall community resilience.

The reporting of hate crime is crucial, as it assists York Regional Police in identifying hate crime trends, hate crime groups and any new and upcoming movements or ideologies that may be concerning to our communities.

From January 2021 to the current reporting period, the HCPU recorded an increase of hate crime occurrences against East-Southeast Asian, Black, Jewish and Muslim communities compared to 2020 statistics. See Table 1 and Table 2 below for a breakdown of the 2021 hate crime statistics versus 2020.

Hate Crime Prevention Strategy

There has been a steady surge of hate/bias incident reporting within York Region. This increase in reporting is a direct indication that communities in our region are more comfortable reporting their experiences with police as a result of the collaboration between York Regional Police and the residents of York Region.

However, the HCPU recognizes that there is still an existing gap between actual events and the rate of reporting. Low rates of hate/bias crime reporting in Canada undermines a police agency's capacity to respond effectively to hate-motivated crime and incidents, support victims and offer reassurance to affected communities. Further community outreach and education are the key to dispel misinformation and the reluctance within community members to report such incidents to police.

York Regional Police is renowned as the lead agency for hate crime investigations and prevention strategies. As part of their approach, York Regional Police is the first police agency to create the Human Rights Education Classroom (HREC) for children and youth with age appropriate lessons. The focus of the HREC is to empower the next generation with the knowledge and essential life skills with the fundamentals of Human Rights.

With a global mindset and through existing partnerships within the community, the HCPU engaged with 350 newly arrived Afghan families in York Region. In collaboration with St. John Ambulance, Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the HCPU was able to provide humanitarian aid and support to these families. This included interpretation assistance, medical and mental health support, in addition to partnering with Afghan community leaders/volunteers and advocacy groups. This community initiative was a clear example of York Regional Police's responsiveness to a global crisis, leaving a reassuring and lasting impression of police.

In 2021, the HCPU successfully completed the "Building Partnerships within York Region" initiative. Over 200 employees from various York Region departments including Bylaw, Operational staff and Customer Service staff were trained on how to address hate crimes. As a result of this initiative, the Town of Richmond Hill, in consultation with the HCPU, developed and implemented a Hate Crime Procedure for their employees.

The Hate Crime Prevention Unit also undertook front-line training initiatives for York Regional Police members. Training was delivered to all front-line officers, supervisors and Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) investigators. This training increased the efficiency of hate crime reports completed by officers, while emphasizing the importance of hate crime reporting and the impact of these incidents on our citizens.

York Regional Police is the only agency that has embarked on providing an annual Hate Crime Conference for investigators within Canada. The 2nd Annual Hate Crime Conference was successfully hosted during the pandemic, in September 2021. The 3rd Annual Conference is now in the planning stages with the goal of expanding to a national level.

In light of the London, Ontario attack that shocked an entire nation, York Regional Police initiated a support network with other agencies to visit the London community and London Police Service. As a result, York Regional Police hosted the first Diversity Summit to unify police agencies across the country, with the objectives of understanding cultural competency and the importance of developing community contacts, well before the time of crisis.

The Hate Crime Prevention Unit continues to monitor international events while collaborating with investigators from our Intelligence Bureaus internally and externally. These ongoing relationships allow for the ongoing, timely transfer of intelligence information across jurisdictions and the forecasting of potential local incidents based on geopolitical events. Examples of such collaboration include the Russian/Ukraine conflict, the rise in the immigration/refugee crisis from the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe. As these events unfold, it is expected that York Region will be impacted by opening its doors to the displaced population arriving in Canada. Further attention will be required at Welcome Centres and an increase in resources to address the situation.

Ongoing administered hate crime training programs include the following:

- Hate crime presentations delivered to schools, colleges, and universities
- Anti-Hate youth engagement workshops at the Community Safety Village
- Collaboration with the RCMP's Integrated National Security Enforcement Team and the delivery of extremism training for York Region First Responders
- Collaboration with the Training and Education Bureau to include diversity perspectives into the Death Investigation course to CIB members
- Continue the delivery of Positive Space training, which is an equity initiative through dialogue on 2SLGBTQ+ that covers vocabulary 101, pronouns, gender identity and gender expression as well as resource availability
- Meetings with the Canadian Coptic Foundation in 2021, addressing the destruction of Christian Churches in retaliation to Residential Schools
- Ongoing hate crime training for Level 3 Recruits

Ongoing hate crime prevention includes the following community engagements:

- Playing with Hate: Safe Gaming and Anti-Hate Gaming Project in collaboration with Dr. Barbara Perry from Ontario Tech University
- Hate crime presentations for municipal race relations committees and Mayors of Markham, Whitchurch-Stouffville, Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury
- Presentations to Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic on the community experiences and impacts of COVID-19
- 360°kids Youth Engagement Series, education of youth and human rights and the Diversity without Borders initiatives
- Presentations to vulnerable communities and Welcome Centres/Settlement workers
- Black History Month event, including Pan-African flag raising ceremony
- Asian Heritage Month event
- Menorah Lighting ceremony
- Places of Worship tours
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination event
- PRIDE flag raising ceremony
- Transgender Day of Remembrance flag raising ceremony
- Pride ISN hosted 2SLGBTQ+ Community Consultative Roundtable

Table 1
Hate Crime by Principle Motivation Factor

Principle Motivation Factor	2020	2021	Variance (%)
Race/Ethnicity	89	104	16.9
Aboriginal	7	1	-85.7
Arab/West Asian	12	12	0.0

Principle Motivation Factor	2020	2021	Variance (%)
Black	39	48	23.1
East and Southeast Asian	19	29	52.6
South Asian	7	5	-28.6
White	1	2	100.0
Multiple Races/Ethnicities	2	4	100.0
Other Race/Ethnicity	0	0	Not calculable
Unknown Race/Ethnicity	0	0	Not calculable
Religion	38	58	52.6
Catholic	1	3	200.0
Jewish	30	43	43.3
Muslim (Islam)	7	11	57.1
Other Religion	0	1	Not calculable
Unknown Religion	0	0	Not calculable
Sexual Orientation	22	30	36.4
Bisexual	0	1	Not calculable
Heterosexual	0	0	Not calculable
Homosexual (Lesbian or Gay)	22	27	22.7
Other Sexual Orientation	0	1	Not calculable
Unknown Sexual Orientation	0	1	Not calculable
Language	6	0	-100.0

Principle Motivation Factor	2020	2021	Variance (%)
English	6	0	-100.0
French	0	0	Not calculable
Other Language	0	0	Not calculable
Unknown Language	0	0	Not calculable
Disability	2	3	50.0
Mental	2	0	-100.0
Physical	0	0	Not calculable
Other Disability	0	0	Not calculable
Unknown Disability	0	0	Not calculable
Gender	3	0	-100.0
Age	0	0	Not calculable
Other Factors	0	0	Not calculable
Unknown	0	0	Not calculable

Table 2
Hate Crime by Most Serious Violation

Most Serious Violation	2020	2021	Variation (%)
Arson	1	0	-100.0
Aggravated Assault III	0	1	Not calculable
Assault with Weapon or CBH	9	14	55.6
Assault Level I	24	27	12.5
Assault Officer	0	1	Not calculable
B&E Commercial	1	2	100.0

Most Serious Violation	2020	2021	Variation (%)
B&E Residential	1	0	-100.0
Cause Disturbance	3	1	66.7
Criminal Harassment	7	11	57.1
Extortion	1	2	100.0
Harassing Communications	16	30	87.5
Incite Hatred	2	0	-100.0
Mischief Hate	39	45	15.4
Mischief Property	10	11	10.0
Mischief Graffiti	6	9	50.0
Mischief Willful	0	2	Not calculable
Other Assaults	1	0	-100.0
Street Robbery	1	0	-100.0
Sexual Assault	1	1	0.0
Theft Under	7	1	-85.7
Utter Threats to Persons	28	35	25.0
Utter Threats to Animals	2	2	0.0
Other	0	0	Not calculable
Total Hate Crimes	160	195	21.9

5. Financial

No financial implications.

6. Conclusion

With the rise of both hate crimes and hate incidents, York Regional Police's HCPU continues to actively investigate occurrences and engage with the community by creating partnerships to address those who are victimized by hate and hate propaganda. While hate cannot be defeated by law enforcement alone, York Regional Police is constantly exploring new

opportunities to build community resilience and well-being for an inclusive York Region. While policing through the lens of a human rights approach, the HCPU has mapped out a practice that will continue to be responsive in confronting hate crime and hate crime incidences that recognizes the complexities of our society.

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request

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

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