

# **The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board**

Public Board Meeting  
May 18, 2023

Report of the Chief of Police

## **Annual Report on Hate Crime Policy**

### **1. Recommendation**

That the Board receive this report for information.

### **2. Summary**

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 with respect to our fast-growing diverse communities.

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

YRPSB and York Regional Police (YRP) are committed to the creation of a Region where all stakeholders live, work and play without fear of hate, bias and 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 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. It also includes strategies and prevention methods to address hate crimes and hate/bias incidents.

- YRP is committed to advancing an organization that is culturally sensitive and responsive to the diversity of its citizens within the Region.
- YRP Hate Crime Prevention Unit (HCPU) is committed to delivering educational initiatives to both the community and its members. This promotes awareness through prevention programs using multiple platforms.

HCPU continues to develop partnerships & strategies to encourage the reporting of hate motivated incidents and hate crimes. These methods include engagement with communities and collaborative partnerships with our diverse cultural and religious organizations.

A summary of these strategies is outlined below.

### **3. Background**

#### **HATE CRIME PREVENTION UNIT**

YRP 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. HCPU is embedded in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Bureau (DEIB), as such it provides opportunities to build and refine relationships with all communities, including those who are racialized and vulnerable. This approach is quite different from many agencies and 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.

We have seen a significant upsurge in mischief to property incidents, mostly in the form of hateful graffiti incidents throughout the region. These incidents are attributable to anti-Black, anti-Semitic, anti-Islamic as well as anti-Asian sentiments.

Since the pause in Police School Programming in March 2021, HCPU has observed a notable increase in hate crime occurrences, both during supervised and unsupervised activities in school buildings. This increase can be illustrated by comparing the numbers in 2021 and 2022. In 2021 YRP had 14 hate crime occurrences during supervised activities and six hate crime occurrences during unsupervised activities which is a total of 20 hate crime occurrences. In 2022, YRP had 43 hate crime occurrences during supervised activities and 21 hate crime occurrences during unsupervised activities, which is a total of 64 hate crime occurrences. This increase could also be ascribed to the effect of being isolated during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the influence of what youths are being exposed to on the internet and social media. 2022 YRP statistics indicate that 23% of the total hate crime occurrences are school-related reports.

## **Reasons for Increase in Hate Crimes**

The increases are likely reflective of global events which include, but are not limited to: tension and conflict in the Middle East; the Ukraine/Russian war; resurging/ongoing anti-Semitism; Islamophobia; Pro-Democracy movements in China; Black Lives Matter Movement; Residential Schools Inquiry; the Iranian human rights struggles (Iranian Revolution movement), as well as growth in immigration to Canada.

Another potential contributing factor to the increase is owed to HCPU's efforts to bring awareness through crime prevention strategies to encourage reporting. HCPU has initiated and developed several anti-hate campaigns to encourage the reporting of hate crimes and hate incidents in York Region. These campaigns include but are not limited to Anti-Hate Campaign with the Region of York, training provided to special constables and York Region Transit (YRT) operators, awareness presentations to newcomers at Immigration Welcome Centres and various community groups through engagements and events (see **Hate Crime Prevention Strategies pg. 4**).

The current trend indicates increasing levels of intolerance to social injustice and discrimination. Canadians are becoming more educated about human rights and hate crimes; thus, they are more responsive to reporting hate crime and hate incidents.

In accordance with YRP's mandate, HCPU has been involved with various hate crime and hate motivated investigations. HCPU has successfully identified perpetrators, laid charges and provided support to victims, their families and their communities.

## **Community Empowerment**

YRP is mindful of the overwhelming impact that hate crime and hate motivated incidents can have on our communities. As such, our agency's approach involves combining HCPU within DEIB, in an effort to ensure all manners of cultural concerns are addressed.

We continue to empower communities and strengthen our relationships by pursuing positive partnerships with our citizens and advocacy/support groups. HCPU engages in community events allowing members of the community to experience a personal interaction and connection with law enforcement. This unique practice promotes cohesiveness between our officers and the communities they serve, including increasing cultural competence. This develops open lines of communication before a crisis arises. The goal of YRP is to truly enhance the quality of life for the members of our communities and to ensure we create a sense of belonging for everyone.

## **4. Analysis**

### **HATE CRIME AND HATE INCIDENTS**

Since 2005, Statistics Canada has collected data on hate crimes from police services in Canada. YRP diligently captures hate/bias incidents and hate crimes to ensure the data reported is of the highest quality. Reporting is crucial in identifying hate crime trends, hate

crime groups and any new and upcoming movements or ideologies that are of concern that may impact community safety.

Reporting hate crime and hate incidents continues to be a challenge. Individuals making reports fear re-victimization, retaliation, culture/language barriers and uncertainty within the justice system. YRP encourages the reporting of hate crime and hate incidents by proactive efforts focused on prevention, education and social cohesion.

See Attachments 1 and 2 for a breakdown of the 2022 hate crime statistics versus 2021.

## **Hate Crime Prevention Strategies**

YRP is one of the leading agencies that focuses on capturing both hate/bias incidents and hate crime data sets. This allows us an opportunity for prevention and education before an incident crosses the criminal threshold.

HCPU recognizes that there is still an existing gap between actual events and the rate of reporting. In order to be innovative in our approach we have undertaken the following:

- National Hate Crime Task Force – HCPU is currently working with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to create a standardized national approach in addressing hate crimes in Canada. The Task Force has selected participants representing police services across the country. This standardized approach includes creating effective engagement and support for victims/targeted communities, as well as police training and support.
- HCPU in partnership with the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group (MDIG) of York Region has launched an anti-hate campaign. The purpose of this campaign is to educate York Region residents and staff to raise awareness about hate crimes and hate-motivated incidents. This campaign aims to promote the importance of speaking out against hate and to come forward to report incidents to police.
- In 2020 HCPU successfully introduced the YRP Hate Crime Conference and Awareness Workshop where investigators from different police services across Ontario gathered in York Region to learn about emerging trends and strategies to combat hate crime. The Hate Crime Conference also provides a better understanding of the types of impact that victims and communities experience when subjected to hate crimes or hate bias incidents, thus, allowing investigators to formulate more appropriate responses. Due to the success of the conference it has now become an annual event and has reached national status. The 2023 Hate Crime Conference will be held in September.
- HCPU formed a community focus group which consisted of diverse members within the Region. This focus group is working with MDIG to review and provide impartial feedback with respect to the content and objectives of the Anti-Hate Campaign.
- Traveller Safety Campaign - HCPU has partnered with YRT in delivering hate crime training/presentation for YRT special constables and operators. This campaign aims

to promote reporting of hate incidents and provide a safer environment for commuters.

- HCPU participated in the advisory committee for the *“Playing with Hate: Safe Gaming and Anti-Hate Gaming Project”* in partnership with Dr. Barbara Perry, John Howard Society, Yorktown Family Services and other members of the community. This project intends to develop a video game and corresponding curriculum to teach youth the skills to counter hateful narratives that are so prevalent in gaming spaces. This project is ongoing and is currently in the pilot phase.
- YRP is the first police agency to create a 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 knowledge, essential life skills and a fundamental understanding of Human Rights and Responsibilities from a young age.
- HCPU also undertook front-line training initiatives for YRP 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.
- HCPU commenced an on-going partnership with Immigrant Welcome Centres within York Region. The partnership involves hate crime presentations for newcomers to Canada of all ages including seniors. HCPU understands that newcomers are in a vulnerable situation adjusting to their new life here and may be subjected to hateful acts. There is great value in providing important information about hate crime and hate bias incidents. In addition to providing information about reporting such experiences to YRP, policing with a global mindset further allows HCPU to monitor international events while collaborating with investigators from our Intelligence Bureaus internally and externally. These ongoing relationships allow for 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 displaced populations arriving in Canada. Further attention will be required at Immigrant Welcome Centres and an increase in resources to address the situation.

#### HCPU & DEIB training programs and events:

- Indigenous Cultural Mindfulness Awareness session run by Nipissing University Award winner and Indigenous advocate George Couchie.
- In 2021 YRP created the first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Assembly for police services across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Due to the success of this assembly it has become an annual event which is rotated amongst police services in the GTA.

- Celebrated the Black History Month event by displaying the history at YRP HQ, including Pan-African flag raising ceremony in collaboration with African Caribbean Canadian Internal Support Network.
- YRP hosted the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination event at Crystal Fountain Banquet Hall in Markham with over 80 community booths and approximately 1000 members of the community in attendance. This event promoted recruiting from Diverse Communities as well as the prevention of hate and prejudice motivated crimes.
- Places of Worship tours with YRP recruits enhances their cultural competence and quality of service to our diverse faith-based communities.
- In collaboration with the Pride Internal Support Network hosted a Pride Breakfast fundraising event at YRP HQ and raised \$7,000 to donate to 2SLGBTQ+ community partners, the Canadian Mental Health Association of York and South Simcoe and the Mobile Youth Walk-in Clinic (MOBYSS) in support of transgender youth.
- Support York Region Alliance of African Canadian Communities (YRACC), SANKOFA Program.
- Hosted an Inclusion Summit for practitioners to learn/share best practices in the area of Equity and Inclusion.
- DEIB participated in a Meet and Greet with the Humanitii organization, a not-for-profit organization who provides relief and development for global citizens.
- Connected with Little People of Ontario and enlisted their assistance with a presentation regarding the inclusion and inclusive service for the Little People community.
- Extensive full day Places of Worship tours for 50 civilian YRP Talent Acquisition members to raise awareness and give them a better understanding of YRP's diverse membership.
- Donation drive for our Ukrainian community.
- Outreach to Canadian Hearing Services regarding an Anti-Bullying presentation.
- Recruit training on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as well as 2SLGBTQ+ awareness.
- Participated in multiple Women's Celebration initiatives.
- Multiple presentations to York Region newcomers both on Zoom and in person to Immigrant Welcome Centres of York Region and settlement workers.
- 360°kids Youth Engagement Series, education of youth and human rights and the Diversity without Borders initiatives.
- Asian Heritage Month event hosted at YRP HQ in collaboration with East and South East Asian Internal Support Networks.
- Menorah Lighting ceremony hosted at HQ.
- PRIDE flag raising ceremony at all YRP Facilities.
- Transgender Day of Remembrance flag raising ceremony at YRP HQ in November.
- Pride ISN hosts a 2SLGBTQ+ Community Consultative Roundtable on a quarterly basis.
- Commemoration of International Human Rights Day in collaboration with Youth for Human Rights Organization and other community groups.
- Monthly meeting with Rainbow Network, discussing community concerns and updates
- Attended Serving with Pride Gala in support of our 2SLGBTQ+ officers.

- In collaboration with the Uniform Recruiting Unit presented on a recruiting campaign for 2SLGBTQ+ community.

## 5. Financial

No financial implications.

## 6. Conclusion

There has been a steady increase in both hate crimes and hate incidents within York Region. YRP's HCPU continues with enhanced hate crime prevention strategies and community engagement. HCPU is committed to engaging with the community by creating partnerships to address those who are victimized by hate and hate propaganda. HCPU remains active in undertaking anti-hate initiatives and has pioneered a practice that will continue to be responsive in confronting hate crimes and hate/bias incidents. HCPU will continue to use the approach of policing through the lens of human rights and policing with a global mindset.

While hate cannot be defeated by law enforcement alone, YRP is constantly exploring new opportunities to build community resilience and well-being for an inclusive York Region.

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request

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

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Attachment (2)

Attachment 1: Hate Crime by Principle Motivation Factors  
Attachment 2: Hate Crime by Most Serious Violation

### Attachment 1 - Hate Crime by Principle Motivation Factors

<b>Principle Motivation Factor</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021/22 Variance Actual</b>	<b>2021/22 Variance (%)</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>44.2</b>
Aboriginal	1	0	-1	-100.0
Arab/West Asian	12	14	2	16.7
Black	48	94	46	95.8
East & Southeast Asian	29	19	-10	-34.5
South Asian	5	10	5	100.0
White	2	2	0	0.0
Multiple Races/Ethnicities	4	2	-2	-50.0
Other Race/Ethnicity	3	9	6	200.0
Unknown Race/Ethnicity	0	0	0	NC
<b>Religion</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>46.6</b>
Catholic	3	0	-3	-100.0
Jewish	43	60	17	39.5
Muslim (Islam)	11	21	10	90.9
Buddhist	0	1	1	NC
Hindu	0	1	1	NC
Christian Orthodox	0	1	1	NC
Other Christian Religion	0	1	1	NC
Other Religion	1	0	-1	-100.0
Unknown Religion	0	0	0	NC
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-6.7</b>
Bisexual	1	0	-1	-100.0
Heterosexual	0	1	1	NC
Homosexual (Lesbian or Gay)	27	27	0	0.0
Other Sexual Orientation	1	0	-1	-100.0
Unknown Sexual Orientation	1	0	-1	-100.0
<b>Language</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>NC</b>
English	0	0	0	NC
French	0	0	0	NC
Other Language	0	0	0	NC
Unknown Language	0	0	0	NC

<b>Disability</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-33.3</b>
Mental	0	1	1	NC
Physical	0	1	1	NC
Other Disability	3	0	-3	-100.0
<b>Gender</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>NC</b>
Male	0	0	0	NC
Female	0	5	5	NC
Transgender Female	0	7	7	NC
Other Factors	0	0	0	NC
<b>Total Hate Crimes</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>42.1</b>

**Attachment 2 - Hate Crime by Most Serious Violation**

<b>Most Serious Violation</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021/22 Variance Actual</b>	<b>2021/22 Variance (%)</b>
<b>Crime Against Persons</b>				
Aggravated Assault III	1	0	-1	-100.0
Assault with Weapon or CBH	14	20	6	42.9
Assault Level I	27	28	1	3.7
Assault with Weapon Police Officer	1	1	0	0.0
Sexual Assault/with Weapon	1	4	3	300.0
Sexual Interference	0	2	2	NC
Robbery Street	0	1	1	NC
Robbery Retail	0	2	2	NC
Criminal Harassment	11	15	4	36.4
Extortion	2	1	-1	-50.0
Harassing Communications	30	23	-7	-23.3
Utter Threat to Persons	35	43	8	22.9
<b>Crime Against Property</b>				
B&E Commercial	2	1	-1	-50.0
Theft Under/Shoplifting	1	2	1	100.0
Mischief Hate	47	97	50	106.4
Mischief Property	11	16	5	45.5
Mischief Graffiti	9	17	8	88.9
<b>Other Criminal Code</b>				
Breach Probation	0	1	1	NC
Cause Disturbance	1	1	0	0.0
Genocide Advocating	0	1	1	NC
Possession of Weapon Other	0	1	1	NC
Utter Threat to Animals	2	0	-2	-100.0
Other	0	0	0	NC
<b>Total Hate Crimes</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>42.1</b>