



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

Public Board Meeting  
April 24, 2024  
For Information

Report of the Chief of Police

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

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## **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 with respect to our fast-growing diverse 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 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. 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 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 or hate/bias incidents.

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

- HCPU is committed to addressing the impact of global events through strategic community engagement which includes reaching out to the communities that are most targeted and impacted.
- HCPU is devoted to delivering educational initiatives to the community, as well as its members. This promotes awareness through prevention programs using multiple platforms.
- YRP is steadfast in advancing an organization that is culturally sensitive and responsive to the diversity of its citizens within the Region.
- HCPU continues to develop partnerships and strategies to encourage the reporting of hate incidents and hate crimes. These methods include engagement with communities and collaborative partnerships with our diverse cultural and religious organizations.

### **3. Background**

YRP is one of the leading 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. Cognizant of the effect of global events, HCPU also recognizes it is incumbent upon its members to stay abreast of the real time impact of world events on our local communities. HCPU is dedicated to ensuring the protection of rights and freedoms outlined in our Charter. Our mission involves building partnerships and engaging with communities locally, especially 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 unique as it allows for direct networking and communication with at-risk groups and members of the community, such as the youth and vulnerable sector, providing a deeper understanding and a broader perspective.

#### **Community Empowerment**

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. HCPU along with the DEIB operationally and effectively respond to hate crimes and hate/bias incidents.

We continue to empower our communities and strengthen our relationships by pursuing positive partnerships with our citizens 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**

We have recognized a significant upsurge in hate crime and hate incidents mostly in the form of hateful graffiti, mischief to property and on-line hate incidents. The increases are mostly reflective of global events which include, but are not limited to, the Israel-Hamas war; the Ukraine/Russian war; anti-Semitism; Islamophobia; Black Lives Matter Movement; The Iranian human rights struggles (Iranian Revolution movement); resurging/ongoing right-wing ideology as well as growth in immigration to Canada.

In accordance with YRP's mandate, HCPU is involved with various hate crime and hate motivated investigations. HCPU has an integral role in dealing with the Israel and Hamas conflict providing support to Muslim, Jewish and other affected communities.

### **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 citizens to report hate crime and hate incidents.

See Attachment #1, Attachment #2 and Attachment #3 for a breakdown of the 2023 hate crime statistics versus 2022.

### **Hate Crime Prevention Strategy**

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 DEIB to address hate crimes and hate/bias incidents with a deeper understanding of cultural sensitivities. The HCPU recognizes that there is still an existing gap between actual events and the rate of reporting. HCPU engages its members and community in hate crime prevention programs and initiatives. This allows us an opportunity for prevention and education before an incident crosses the criminal threshold.

**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.
- In response to global and local events, YRP increased police presence, patrol and observations around Places of Worship in York Region. In April, 2023, a male attended a Markham Mosque during Ramadan morning prayers and drove his vehicle toward the crowd of worshippers, while uttering various anti-Islamic comments. YRP was able to identify and arrest this individual. HCPU quickly engaged in the investigation, in collaboration with the Criminal Investigation Bureau; HCPU personally reached out to every mosque, Muslim cultural centres and businesses to inform them of the incident, to calm the tension and to provide support to the community during this difficult time.
- In 2023, HCPU completed a training initiative for the York Region District School Board staff, including Superintendents, Principals and Vice Principals with information and criteria required to report a hate crime and or hate/bias incident. The training also included how to preserve evidence and deal with victims, while ensuring that they are complying with policies. This provided a unified message to all their employees.
- In 2023, HCPU successfully hosted an International Hate Crime Conference. Approximately 100 investigators and analysts from several police services around the country attended. The five-day conference included major case incident case studies from around the world. HCPU is in the planning stage for the 2024 Hate Crime conference.
- 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 the Human Rights Education Classroom (HREC) for children and youth with age-appropriate lessons. The focus of the HREC is to empower and educate the younger generation about human rights and human responsibilities. This endeavour has been a highlight of YRP’s commitment to community engagement and hate crime prevention education through young people within our communities.

- HCPU commenced an on-going partnership with Immigrant Welcome Centres within York Region. HCPU recognizes the value in educating newcomers about hate crimes and hate/bias incidents and how to report their experiences to police.
- In 2023, HCPU launched a 'Hateful Graffiti' initiative in collaboration with all nine municipalities. Many municipal by-law offices created new procedures in identifying, preserving and reporting hate crimes along with increased patrol in their respective areas of responsibility. This initiative was very successful in reducing the frequency of hateful graffiti.
- 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; how to effectively investigate, capture and report hateful incidents.

**HCPU and DEIB participated and attended the following events:**

- DEIB hosted International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination at Crystal Fountain Banquet Hall in Markham. Eighty (80) community booths and over a thousand members from the community attended.
- Inter-Faith Initiative by bringing faith leaders together to create an open dialogue with the purpose of sharing their faiths and beliefs in a safe and secure environment.
- Celebrated the Black History Month event by displaying the history at YRP HQ, including a Pan-African flag raising ceremony in collaboration with the African Caribbean Canadian Internal Support Network.
- Asian Heritage Month event hosted at YRP HQ in collaboration with East and South East Asian Internal Support Network.
- Celebrated the Persian New Year with the Happy Nowruz event at the Community Safety Village along with community members hosted by the DEIB team.
- In collaboration with the Pride Internal Support Network hosted a Pride Breakfast fundraising event at YRP HQ.
- Coordinated earthquake relief for the Turkish community by purchasing daily essential items and delivering them to a local Turkish community centre.
- In light of the Israel-Hamas Conflict, members of DEIB were deployed to deescalate tension between Jewish and Muslim community members. Business Intelligence tool was updated with the latest emergency contacts.
- Support York Region Alliance of African Canadian Communities (YRACC), SANKOFA Program at YRP Community Safety Village.

- Participated and assisted in the Youth in Policing Initiative (YIPI) program run by the Community Safety Village, including interviews, Olympics and the Graduation Ceremony.
- 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 Uniform Recruiting Unit presented on a recruiting campaign for the 2SLGBTQ+ community.
- Outreach at the Richmond Hill Welcome Centre for IMPACT Night to celebrate newcomers, their resiliency and achievements.
- Collaborated with the Vaughan Welcome Centre and delivered a presentation at the Women's Fair held at the Aloft Hotel.
- Collaborated with AVIVA Canada to prepare care kits for 360°kids.
- Set up the DEIB booth at the Oak Valley Health Diversity Fair hosted by Markham Stouffville Hospital and organized with Black Mental Health Canada Inc. to provide training for YRP members.
- Attended World Religion Day at Ahmadiyya Mosque celebrating their faith-based communities.
- Attended the annual Martin Luther King event and Black History Month hosted by Durham Regional Police in Whitby.
- Participated in several Mall Walks throughout Markham and Richmond Hill to celebrate Lunar New Year and met and interacted with community members.
- Attended the Toronto Chinese Business Association in Toronto for community outreach and support the Asian community during Asian Heritage Month.
- Attended multiple National Day for Truth and Reconciliation events in the region and supported by participating in their ritual ceremonies.
- Attended numerous Iftar dinner events at various locations to celebrate with the Islamic Faith community.
- Attended the Gursikh Sabha Temple in Toronto to celebrate Sikh Heritage Month.
- Supported the Jewish community at Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto by attending the Lag-B'Omer Musical Bonfire.
- Attended the Diwali Celebration, one of the most recognized Sikh celebrations, held at the Vedic Cultural Centre.

- Shared the importance of the Festival of Lights: Menorah Lighting Ceremony, attending events at various locations across the region. YRP participated in events at 2 District, 4 District, YRP Headquarters and Vaughan City Hall.
- Members of DEIB attended the Japanese - Taiwanese Food Expo at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre to learn about Japanese and Taiwanese modern and traditional cultures and to show support to community members.
- Attended numerous “All Nation POW WOW” at various locations to celebrate and highlight the Indigenous community.
- Joined Hot Meals and Good Company at Temple Har Zion to interact with newcomer families in York Region that are in need.
- Hosted the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama’at Explore Islam Nationwide Exhibition to educate our members.
- Our DEIB unit attended the Holocaust Museum in Toronto to learn the history.

## **5. Financial Considerations**

No financial implications.

## **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.

## **7. Conclusion**

In 2023, York Region experienced a higher than usual volume of hate crime and hate incident reports as a result of the unrest in the Middle East that highlighted the global dynamics of our local community. York Regional Police responded in a professional and empathetic manner in keeping with our Mission, Vision and Values. DEIB and HCPU were actively engaged in constant dialogue with the affected communities which resulted in cooperative meditation amongst various parties.

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

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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) Hate Crime Incidents by Motivation Factor, 2022-2023  
(2) Hate Crime Incidents by Most Serious Violation, 2022-2023  
(3) Hate Crime and Hate Bias Incidents in York Region, 2022-2023