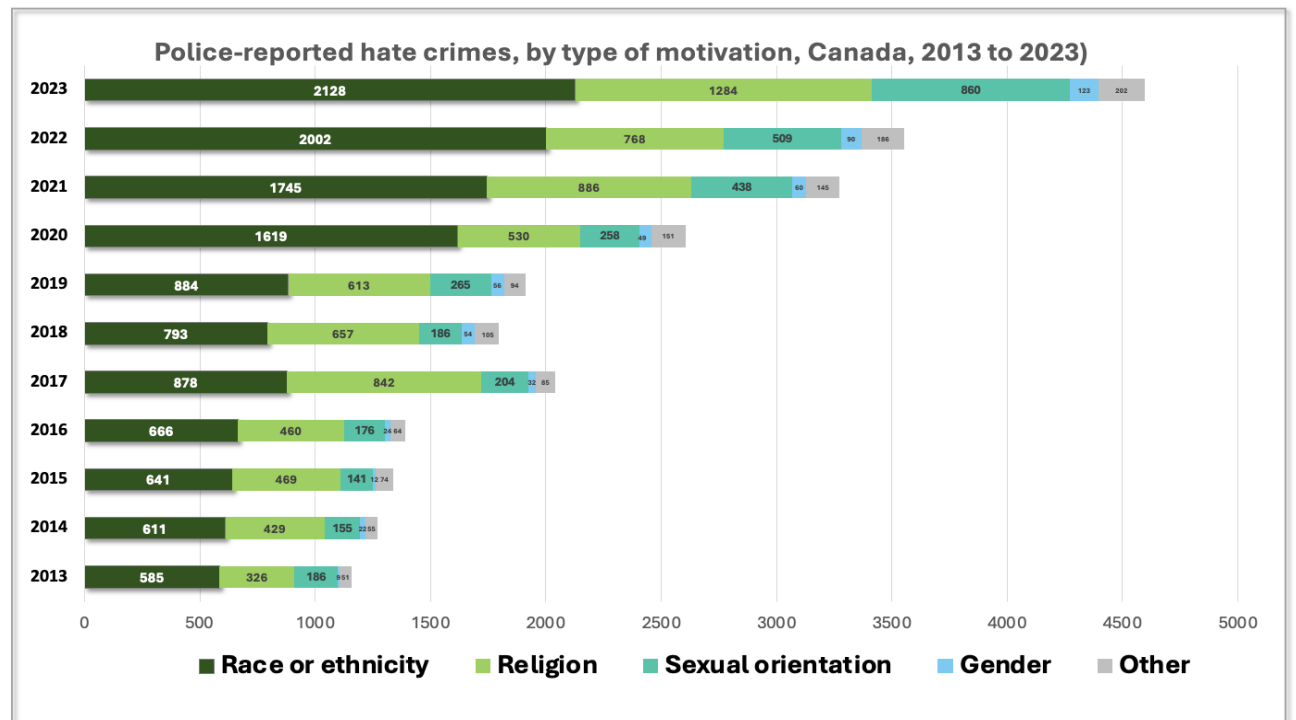


## Understanding and Confronting the Deep Roots and Rising Rates of Hate Crime in Canada

Perry, B., Blair, S., & Cashore, M. (2025). *The landscape of hate crime scholarship in Canada*. Ontario Tech University. [Read the full report here.](#)

Canada's rising rates of hate crime stand in stark contrast to its national vision as a multicultural country: The number of police-reported hate crimes nearly tripled between 2014 and 2023, reaching 4,777 incidents in 2023. However, the Canadian legal system is ill-equipped to address hate crime effectively.

Hate crimes inflict deep and long-lasting trauma; affecting not just individuals but whole communities. As a result, the promise of harmonious multicultural coexistence in Canada will remain unfulfilled unless we confront the systemic racism beneath the surface.



Adapted from [Statistics Canada, 2023](#)

### Structural Racism and Colonial Legacies

- Hate crime cannot be explained as isolated acts of irrational motivation; it reflects **systemic issues**.
- **Colonialism is directly connected** to hate crime in Canada because it established these systemic inequalities.
- The **dual dynamic of over-policing and under-protection** reflects a **territorial defence of cultural space**, and it continues to shape racialized communities' experiences such as anti-Black profiling and Indigenous deaths in police custody, and the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).

### Underreporting and Data Gaps

- **The number of hate crime far exceeds police data:** In 2019, over 223,000 self-reported hate crimes were captured in surveys, versus 1,946 reported cases - due to fear of retaliation, distrust of police, and language barriers
- Lack of training often leads to **inconsistent recording and classification** of hate incidents by police.
- Current **data are not capturing the complexity** of how race, gender, religion and sexuality interact in victimization

### Trigger Events and “Permission to Hate”

Surges in hate crime were seen follow major political or global events:

- The **Trump presidency** (2016–2020/2024 to present) normalized racial hostility and emboldened White supremacist sentiment in the US but also in Canada.
- The **COVID-19 pandemic** triggered anti-Asian scapegoating.
- The **Gaza War** (2023–present) has led to spikes in both antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents in Canada.

### Targets and Impact of Hate Crime

- In 2023, **16.4%** of all police-reported hate crimes **targeted Black Canadians** (4.3% of the population).
- Hate crimes targeting **Indigenous peoples** are likely to involve violence, and Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people face disproportionate levels of violence.
- **Islamophobic hate crime increased** since October 7, 2023, including harassment, threats, vandalism, and violence; **with Muslim women also facing gendered harassment and assault**.
- **Antisemitic hate crimes** rose 67% since 2022 amid global conflict and the Gaza war and were more likely to be crimes against property (such as vandalism) than crimes of violence against persons.



Hate crime in Canada is not an anomaly but a **manifestation of systemic oppression** rooted in colonialism, Whiteness, and structural inequality. For those affected, it leads to individual and collective (re)traumatization as well as constraints on social participation and expression.

## Recommended Actions

### Expand and Decolonize Hate Crime Research

- Increase funding for Indigenous and racialized scholars to ensure that research is grounded in the complexities of lived experiences
- Utilize frameworks designed to capture intersectional identities and experiences

### Strengthen Reporting and Data Systems

- Standardize hate crime reporting formats and police training for responding to hate crimes
- Develop reporting systems outside of police structures

### Advance Education for Prevention

- Implement an anti-racism and hate-prevention curriculum at all education levels to challenge disinformation and stereotypes

### Reform of Policing & Justice System

- Ensure transparency and accountability in how police respond to hate crimes
- Expand community-centered approaches to justice (see [Indigenous Justice Strategy \(2025\)](#))

### Support Victims and Build Community Trust

- Fund holistic trauma-informed victim services that support the complex needs of victim-survivors

