

## Brief on Statistics Canada Hate Crimes Report

### Key Takeaways

- Compared to 2019 data, the 2020 report found a 2% decrease in crimes motivated by hatred of a (perceived) sexual orientation. In 2020, police reported 259 hate crimes targeting a perceived sexual orientation. In 2019, 265 hate crimes targeting a perceived sexual orientation were reported.
- From 2011 to 2020, there were 1,177 victims of a hate crime based on sexual orientation.
- Analysis of all police-reported hate crimes since 2011 shows that individuals who are victims of hate crimes on the basis of their sexual orientation tended to be the youngest among hate crime victims and sustain the highest proportion of injury.

### Background

Since 2005, the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (CCJCSS) has collected police-reported crime statistics through the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCRS). The UCRS collects data on the number of criminal incidents substantiated by police, the clearance status of those incidents, and information on persons who are charged. Based on these statistics, CCJCSS produces an annual report on police-reported hate crimes in Canada.

In this context, police-reported hate crimes are defined as follows: “a criminal violation against a person or property motivated by hatred, based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual

orientation or gender identity or expression, or any other similar factor" (Wang & Moreau, 2022, p. 5).

The category of hate crimes based on (perceived) sexual orientation does not include crimes targeting the transgender population, as those are collected under the category of sex or gender (Wang & Moreau, 2022, p. 19).

## **What does the 2020 report state about hate crimes against 2SLGBTQI?**

The latest CCJCSS report on police-reported hate crime in Canada (Wang & Moreau, 2022) was released on March 17, 2022. The report states that of all hate crimes, those targeting sexual orientation comprised **10%** of all police-reported hate crimes; of these crimes, 81% specifically targeted gay and lesbian people, 2% targeted bisexual people, 9% targeted another sexual orientation excluding 'heterosexual', and 7% targeted individuals with an unknown sexual orientation.

Of the 575 hate crimes that were also reported as cybercrimes between 2016 and 2020, 13% targeted a sexual orientation.

From 2011 to 2020, there were 1,177 victims of a hate crime based on sexual orientation—of these 79% were identified as male, and 21% were identified as female (excluded from the analyses are victims where sex or gender were unknown).<sup>1</sup> By contrast, 66% of all types of police-reported hate crimes were identified as male, and 34% identified as women, indicating a slight overrepresentation of male victims of hate crimes targeting sexual orientation.

55% of sexual orientation-based hate crime victims were attacked by a stranger; 39% by an acquaintance (e.g., authority figures, friends, business relationships, casual acquaintances, criminal relationships, neighbours, roommates, and reverse authority figures); and 6% by a family member or intimate partner.

Non-violent hate crimes targeting sexual orientation occurred more often at a residence (36%) than anywhere else.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that throughout the report, there is a conflation between sex and gender (e.g., in Table 7, 'male' and 'female' are identified as categories of gender). A footnote in Table 7 notes that gender diverse persons have been recoded to either male or female "in order to ensure the protection of confidentiality and privacy", given the small counts of victims and accused persons identified as "gender diverse". This decision illustrates the tension between visibility and privacy/confidentiality concerns.

From 2011 to 2020, police reported **65** hate crimes targeting individuals with gender identities other than male or female,<sup>2</sup> comprising 1% of all reported hate crimes for this time period ( $n = 6,533$ ).

Persons accused of hate crimes (from 2011 to 2020) tend to be male and younger, with 89% of persons accused of hate crime targeting sexual orientation identified as male. The median age of persons accused of such hate crimes is 23 years of age (compared to, for instance, a median of 35 years of age among persons accused of hate crimes based on religion).

## What has changed since the 2019 report?

The 2020 report found a **2%** decrease in crimes motivated by hatred of a (perceived) sexual orientation: in 2020, police reported 259 hate crimes targeting a perceived sexual orientation. In 2019, 265 hate crimes targeting a perceived sexual orientation were reported. Most incidents of such hate crimes were reported in Ontario ( $n = 115$ ), followed by British Columbia ( $n = 40$ ), Alberta ( $n = 39$ ), and Québec ( $n = 35$ ).

In 2020, 108 police-reported hate crimes based on sexual orientation were categorized as non-violent,<sup>3</sup> compared to 123 in 2019. In 2020, 151 police-reported hate crimes based on sexual orientation were categorized as violent,<sup>4</sup> a slight uptick from 142 in 2019.

Compared to 2019, there was a decline of 5 incidents in hate crimes targeting gender identities other than male or female in 2020. The authors of the report note that despite the relatively small number of hate crimes in this category, incidents motivated by hatred of gender diverse people were more often violent in nature, with **80%** of incidents involving violence. Similarly, **61%** of hate crimes motivated by a person's perceived sexual orientation were violent.

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<sup>2</sup> The UCRS captures sex and gender identity in three categories: male, female or other. 'Other' includes transgender, agender, or intersex.

<sup>3</sup> In this report, non-violent hate crimes include the following: mischief in relation to property used primarily by an identifiable group, general mischief, advocating genocide, public incitement of hatred, or other non-violent violations.

<sup>4</sup> In this report, violent hate crimes include common assault (Level 1), assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (Level 2), aggravated assault (Level 3), uttering threats, criminal harassment, or other violent violations (e.g., homicide, attempted murder, robbery, and indecent or harassing communications).



## Are there any notable trends?

The authors of the latest CCJCSS report indicate that proportions of hate crimes rooted in a particular motivation are similar to those from recent years.

Analysis of all police-reported hate crimes since 2011 shows that individuals who are victims of hate crimes on the basis of their sexual orientation tended to be the **youngest** among hate crime victims and **sustain the highest proportion of injury**. The median age of victims of hate crimes based on sexual orientation were 28.0 years of age (compared to a median age of 32 years of all victims). From 2016 to 2020, the median age of victims targeted for sexual orientation has remained lower than those targeted based on religion, race, or ethnicity (Wang & Moreau, 2022, p. 23). From 2011 to 2020, 38% of victims of violent hate crimes targeting sexual orientation sustained injury.

## Notes when considering these statistics and trends:

A central concern regarding hate crime statistics is that victims of hate crimes are less likely to report their victimization to police than are individuals who are victims of other crimes (Roberts, 1995). Previous Canadian research has found that under-reporting of hate crimes is particularly high among those who are targeted based on their sexual orientation, in part because of a belief that their victimization will not be taken seriously by law enforcement, or that police may be a source of further victimization (Roberts, 1995). Further, 2SLGBTQI people fear *secondary victimization* resulting from reporting their victimization (for example, fear that disclosure of one's sexual orientation or gender identity accompanying the reporting process may elicit negative reactions or repercussions; Roberts, 1995).

Another important detail to keep in mind is that when a hate crime incident involves more than one motivation (e.g., gender and sexual orientation), the police report only the primary motivation, determined by the circumstances of the incident and on the perceptions of the accused. These perceptions may not necessarily represent how a victim self-identifies. To accommodate reporting incidents with multiple motivations, the UCR survey has now expanded hate crime motivation categories and has added a secondary motivation category. These changes were made available to police for reporting purposes in October 2021. We can therefore expect more nuanced, intersectional analyses in the next report.

## References

Roberts, J. V. (1995). *Disproportionate harm: Hate crime in Canada—An analysis of recent statistics* (Working Document WD1995-11e). Ottawa: Department of Justice Canada. [https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/crime/wd95\\_11-dt95\\_11/toc-tdm.html](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/crime/wd95_11-dt95_11/toc-tdm.html)

Wang, J. H. & Moreau, G. (2022). *Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2020* (report no. 85-002-X). Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00005-eng.pdf?st=WdLxm4bt>