



Hate crimes against Muslim-Canadians more than doubled in 3 years

By Anna Mehler Paperny
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The number of police-reported hate crimes targeting Muslim-Canadians more than doubled over a three-year period — even as the total number of hate crimes dropped.

In 2014, police forces across the country recorded 99 religiously motivated hate crimes against Muslims — up from 45 in 2012.

Hate crimes were up since 2013 but down overall since 2012 — a total of 1,295 in 2014. The hate crime rate across Canada is 3.7 per 100,000 people. But that varies from province to province: Ontario is the highest, with 4.8 hate crimes per 100,000 people.

The rates of hate crimes per 100,000 people went up in Calgary and in some of the fast-growing areas of B.C.'s Lower Mainland and the Toronto area. They improved in Hamilton, Kingston, Peterborough, Red Deer, Regina and Saskatoon.

Hate crimes in 2014 were predominantly mischief, with assault and uttering threats a close second and third.

The number of racially motivated crimes targeting black Canadians has dropped to 238 from 295. But you're still more likely to be harassed, assaulted or have your property vandalized for being black than for any other reason.

Religion is the second most common motivation for hate crime, after race (Quebec is the only province where you're more likely to be attacked based on your religion than your race). And while Jewish Canadians are still the most targeted religious group in Canada, those types of attacks have been dropping as attacks on Muslims increased.

The [National Council of Canadian Muslims](#) has been swamped with reports of Islamophobic hate crimes: Four in one day this week, says spokesperson [Amira Elghawaby](#) — and they're investigating a fifth.

“We’re deeply, deeply, deeply concerned,” she said. It isn’t clear whether the increase means there are more xenophobic crimes happening or that more of them are being reported, Elghawaby said.

“We do know that people are often reluctant to report a hate crime because there might be a sense of humiliation, a sense of bringing negative attention to themselves. And not always sure they’re going to get support.”

But she’s seen a spike in response to Islamophobic rhetoric in public discourse — whether during Canada’s election campaign, which featured [a tipline for “barbaric cultural practices,”](#) or in the wake of [terrorist attacks in Paris last fall.](#)

Even the widespread use of “[Islamic State](#)” to refer to the power-hungry group terrorizing Iraqi and Syrian civilians while sending radicalized emissaries to blow themselves up in European cities, she says, is “tarring the entire community.”

The result is that people feel unsafe in their neighbourhoods, in grocery stores, on public transit. She argues it’s crucial for witnesses of hatred and ordinary Canadians to step up — it’s not enough to not actively participate in attacks.