

CANADA'S NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON COMBATTING HATE

Regional & Community

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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A Message from The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion

In Canada, diversity is a fact, but inclusion is a choice. However, as we’ve seen over the last two years, the socioeconomic challenges, historical vulnerabilities, and inequities experienced by different communities across Canada have been exacerbated by COVID-19.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis, Black, Asian, Arab, Latinx, Jewish, Muslim, other racialized, and religious minority communities, as well as gender diverse populations and individuals with visible and invisible disabilities, have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

Recent events at home and abroad have also shown that no community is immune to the effects of hateful rhetoric, with extremist groups and individuals determined to bring harm – offline and online – to historically marginalized communities and in an attempt to unravel the democratic foundations of our free and open society.

Whether it's racism and discrimination that is anti-Indigenous, anti-Black, anti-Asian, anti-Arab, Islamophobic, antisemitic, transphobic, or homophobic, we must do more to combat hate, racism, and discrimination in all its forms. We are stronger when we stand together, and when we listen to each other. As a country, we must understand how past injustices are at the root of today’s inequalities, and we have to be willing to fight against the systemic barriers that our neighbours face in their everyday lives.

We took a first step in that direction in 2019, when we launched Canada’s three-year Anti-Racism Strategy, and strengthened the Government’s capacity to combat racism and hate by investing millions to empower communities. We’re also producing more disaggregated data to raise awareness and change attitudes. Now, building on our ongoing work, we’re renewing it for 2022 in our continued fight against hate and discrimination.

Our Government's commitment to tackling hate-motivated crimes and violence, as well as hate groups, is unwavering; and it includes fighting serious forms of harmful content online to protect Canadians, while also holding social media platforms and other online services accountable for the content they host. By developing a National Action Plan on Combatting Hate, we will accelerate our work in building a better, safer, more inclusive, and equitable future for all people in Canada.

Now is the time to move from ideas to action. Over the next while, we will host a series of virtual consultations engaging leaders from diverse communities with lived experience of racism and hate. We are committed to establishing a sustainable framework for change by removing barriers and promoting a country where every person is able to have an equal opportunity to succeed. Achieving this vision is not just a way to build a better country in general; it also addresses the human cost of hate.

Diversity is a fact, but inclusion is a choice. As Canadians, we must choose to be advocates of change in our communities, and I know that together, we will ensure that everyone is able to live a life free of hate and discrimination in this country we all love.

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen,
Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion

Context

Statistics Canada Data on Police Reported Hate Crimes

In 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, police reported 2,669 hate crimes in Canada, up 37% from 2019. This marks the largest number of police-reported hate crimes since comparable data became available in 2009. Also in 2020, police-reported hate crimes targeting race or ethnicity almost doubled (+80%) from 2019, accounting for the vast majority of the national increase in hate crimes. While the majority (84%) of police-reported hate crimes in Canada occurred in large urban centres or Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs), rates increased the same (+35%) in CMAs and non-CMAs, which include smaller cities, small towns or rural areas.

Much of the rise in these types of hate crimes was the result of crimes targeting the Black population (+318 incidents or +92%), the East or Southeast Asian population (+202 incidents or +301%), the Indigenous population (+44 incidents or +152%), and the South Asian population (+38 incidents or +47%). In 2020, police reported the highest number of hate crimes targeting each of these population groups since comparable data became available. The number of police-reported hate crimes targeting Indigenous people—First Nations people, Métis or Inuit—more than doubled from 29 in 2019 to 73 in 2020. Among reported hate crimes targeting a religion in 2020, the Jewish and Muslim populations continued to be the most frequent targets, accounting for 62% and 16% of crimes against a religion, respectively. Although the number of police-reported hate crimes targeting sexual orientation was down by 2% in 2020 from 2019, the 259 incidents were the second highest reported since comparable data have been available since 2009.

Government Initiatives on Combatting Hate

The Government of Canada has taken a number of actions to combat hate, but more needs to be done. We want to hear from you on what else the government should be doing. Actions taken to date include the following:

Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy: A three-year strategy designed to lay a foundation to tackle systemic racism through immediate actions. This includes setting up the Federal Anti-Racism Secretariat, which coordinates a whole-of-government approach to combatting systemic racism, discrimination, and hate. It also includes the Anti-Racism Action Program (ARAP) and the Community Support, Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Initiatives Program (CSMARI), which provides \$70 million in funding support for local, regional and national initiatives and outcomes-based activities in key areas of intervention, including combatting online hate.

The \$11 million **Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Program**, which provides timely funding and support for communities at risk of hate-crime.

The Digital Citizen Initiative is a multi-component strategy that aims to support democracy and social cohesion in Canada by building citizen resilience against online disinformation and building partnerships to support a healthy information ecosystem.

Task Force on Hate Crimes created by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) and the Chiefs of Police National Roundtable to increase awareness of the scope, nature, and impact of hate crimes across Canada and to create national standards to better support targeted communities across the country. This will include police training, effective engagement with victims and communities, and supporting hate crime units across the country.

Commitment to introduce legislation to address online harms to combat serious forms of harmful online content, specifically hate speech, terrorist content, content that incites violence, child sexual abuse material and the non-consensual distribution of intimate images.

Commitment to new legislation to make sure that **social media platforms and other online services are held accountable** for the content that they host. The legislation will recognize the importance of freedom of expression for all Canadians and will take a balanced and targeted approach to tackle extreme and harmful speech.

Commitment to **strengthen the *Canada Human Rights Act* and the *Criminal Code*** to more effectively combat online hate.

Commitment to establish a **National Support Fund for Survivors of Hate-Motivated Crimes** to help survivors with any uninsured costs that they have had to bear such as, mental health care, physiotherapy, medical equipment, and paramedical services.

Background – Canada’s National Action Plan on Combatting Hate

We know that today, there are peoples and communities that face systemic racism, discrimination, hate and xenophobia in our country. Recent events at home and abroad have also shown that no community is immune to the effects of hateful rhetoric. Whether it's racism and discrimination that is anti-Indigenous, anti-Black, anti-Asian, anti-Arab, Islamophobic, antisemitic, misogynistic, transphobic or homophobic, the Government of Canada needs to do more to combat racism, discrimination and hate in all its forms.

We are stronger when we stand together, and when we listen to each other. As a country, we must understand how past injustices are at the root of today’s inequalities, and we have to be willing to fight against the systemic barriers that our neighbours face in their everyday lives.

Hate crimes of any kind have no place in Canada. No one should ever have to face hate or discrimination because of who they are, who they love, or how they worship. Everyone should feel acknowledged, safe, celebrated, and free to be their true authentic selves without harm. Tackling hate and hate groups matters because of the damage they cause to victims and their families, but also because of the negative impact they have on communities and our entire society.

The Government of Canada is taking actions to address the troubling rise in hate crimes and hate groups, not just because of the devastating consequences they have on the victims and their families, but also because they can divide communities and increase insecurity nationwide. The government is launching a consultation process to inform the first National Action Plan on Combatting Hate. We want to make sure that people across Canada, particularly those with lived experience of hate, have their say in defining how it will deliver tangible change.

Purpose

To provide respectful spaces for participants to explore their perspectives and offer recommendations on what the Government of Canada can do to address hate.

Timing: March – April 2022

Format: Virtual, Bilingual Roundtable Consultations with opportunity for submissions through a dedicated online questionnaire.

Engagement Questions

The following questions will be used to guide the discussions.

National Action Plan on Combatting Hate

Engagement Questions

DISCUSSION PROMPT #1

What type of support, training, investment, and/or data research does your community/region need to prevent, educate, or combat hate?

Sub-questions

- Are there any programs you believe should be strengthened or introduced in your community that would be effective in combatting hate?
- What measures, such as training and awareness campaigns, are needed to help those who are at risk of falling for hate propaganda or joining hate groups, as well as working directly with offenders?
- What can be done to help mainstream media outlets report on hate groups and the mainstreaming of hateful ideologies.

DISCUSSION PROMPT #2

What tools and/or investment would you like to see developed to increase safety around your organization/place of worship or neighborhood?

Sub-questions

- What type of support would allow for a better representation of Indigenous peoples as well as communities with lived experience of racism and other forms of discrimination in the media, from an intersectional perspective?
- In terms of law enforcement and legislation, what measures would you like to see amended, strengthened, or introduced to combat hate incidents and crimes, dismantle hate groups as well as stop the flow of funding to such groups?
- How should Canada work with international partners to prevent dark money and transnational hate networks from increasing hate incidents and crimes in Canada?
- How can research and data bolster the work already being done to combat hate within your community?

DISCUSSION PROMPT #3

In your opinion, what measures, such as a federal anti-racism act and/or enforcement and/or oversight mechanisms, are needed to strengthen Canada's anti-racism strategy?

How to Participate & Provide Input

Engagement Webpage

A [dedicated webpage](#) with an option to participate in an online questionnaire will be available from March 30 to April 30, 2022 to session participants and stakeholders interested in offering further feedback based on discussion topics and themes following the sessions. This feedback will be gathered and further analyzed as it relates to the National Action Plan on Combatting Hate.

Zoom Session Chat Box

During the virtual consultation sessions, participants will have the opportunity to respond directly to discussion questions and prompts in real time through the zoom chat box. Reports generated through zoom will capture all comments and recommendations made during the sessions which can be downloaded and further analyzed.

Zoom Live Discussion

Within the session agenda will be an 'Open Discussion' section where participants will be invited to provide their remarks verbally, through both video and audio. Notetakers will be on hand to record this verbal feedback, that can be later analyzed.