OSCE ODIHR
HATE CRIME REPORTING

Information contained in this report was compiled as part of ODIHR's 2024 Hate Crime Report.
For more information, including on previous years' reporting, please visit: hatecrime.osce.org/poland

For more information about ODIHR's Hate Crime Report, visit: hatecrime.osce.org/our-methodology

2024

Summary

Poland regularly reports hate crime data to ODIHR. Several public bodies – including the Police and the Prosecutor's Office – are involved in hate crime monitoring and/or data collection. Hate crime data are regularly published.

There is a high degree of hate crime specialization in both police and prosecutor structures. More than 100 specialist hate crime prosecutors have been appointed, and a network of hate crime co-ordinators was established within the police in 2014. In 2015, following a request by the lower house of parliament, ODIHR provided a legislative review of proposed changes to the Criminal Code of Poland, including hate crime provisions.

In 2023, Polish police participated in a three-day train-the-trainer workshop as part of ODIHR's Training Against Hate Crime for Law Enforcement (TAHCLE). In 2018, the Ministry of the Interior, ODIHR and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency co-organized a workshop on understanding and improving hate crime recording and data collection based on ODIHR's Information Against Hate Crimes Toolkit (INFAHCT) programme. In 2019, ODIHR co-operated with the Commissioner for Human Rights in Poland to issue a report on the nature and scale of unreported hate crimes against members of selected communities in Poland. In 2016, Polish prosecutors participated in a three-day train-the-trainer workshop as part of ODIHR's Prosecutors and Hate Crime (PAHCT) programme.

Hate crime data collection in Poland
Support for hate crime victims in Poland
Hate crime capacity building in Poland
Poland's hate crime legislation

ODIHR's Key Observation

ODIHR recognizes Poland's efforts to strengthen the capacity of hate crime coordinators within the police to address hate crimes. However, based on the available information, it observes that Poland's hate crime recording and statistics do not sufficiently distinguish hate crimes from other crimes. In addition, ODIHR observes that Poland would benefit from further

building the capacity of prosecutors on hate crime.



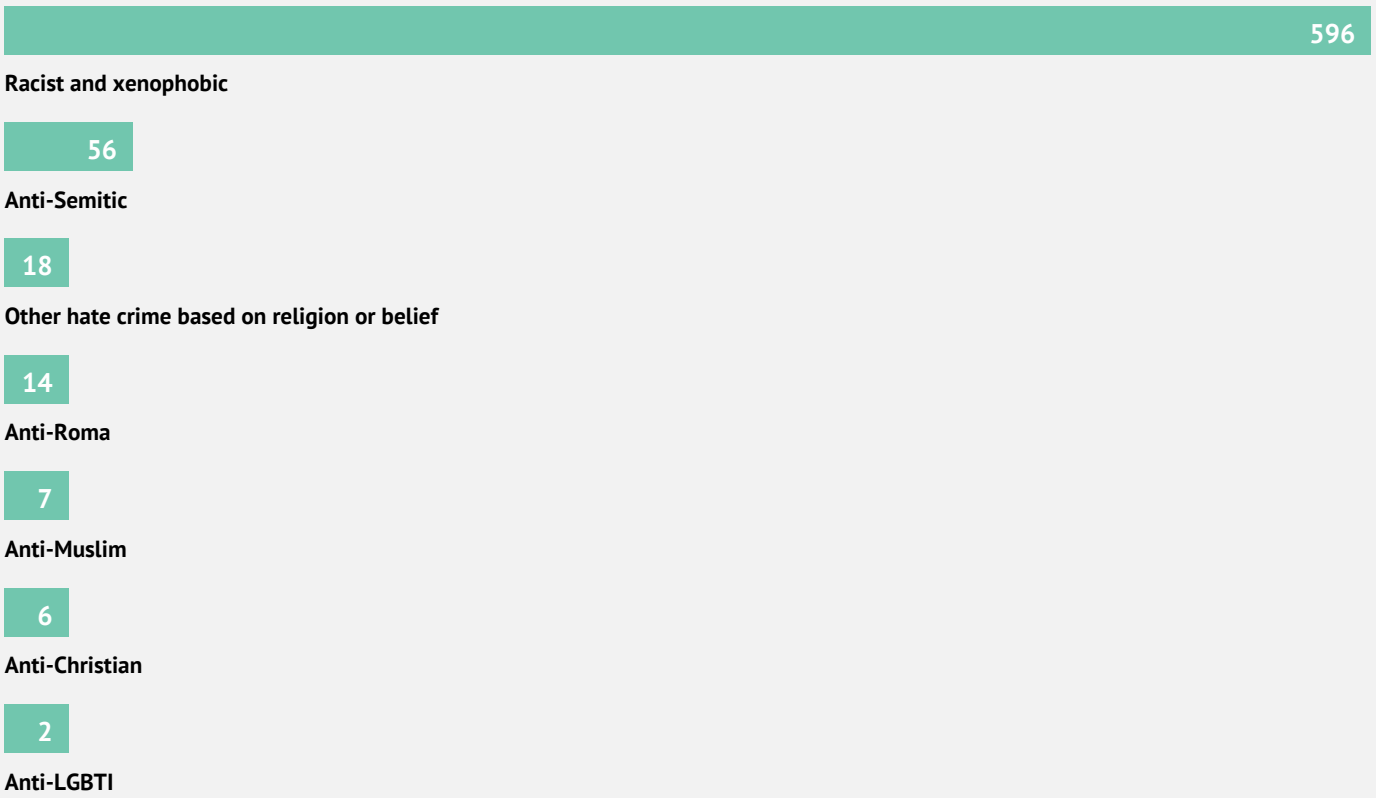
Official Data

The police records represent the number of proceedings initiated by police for hate crimes cases in 2024, including proceedings that were later discontinued owing to a lack of evidence. The significant year-to-year drop in police-recorded hate crimes is partly due to ODIHR's exclusion this year of the 337 cases of criminal hate speech, per a change in ODIHR's methodology. The prosecution figure includes the number of indictments and requests to convict a person without holding a trial. A total of 150 cases were excluded as incidents of insults, discrimination, insults against the Polish Nation, Propagation of fascism or other totalitarian regime, and public incitement offences, all of which fall outside the OSCE hate crime definition. The prosecution figure above may still contain offences that fall outside the OSCE hate crime definition. The records on sentenced hate crimes represent the number of persons convicted in the first instance before district and regional courts. Sentencing figures include cases of discrimination and hate speech, which fall outside the OSCE hate crime definition but could not be disaggregated.

Year	Hate crimes recorded by police	Prosecuted	Sentenced
2024	664	211	246

Police data by bias motivation

The numbers presented here refer to police investigations that were initiated as hate crimes. The numbers may include offences of 'insults', which fall outside the OSCE hate crime definition but could not be disaggregated. These figures also include hate crimes committed with multiple bias motivations.



Police data by type of crime

The numbers presented here refer to police investigations that were initiated as hate crimes. The numbers may include offences of 'insults', which fall outside the OSCE hate crime definition but could not be disaggregated. These figures also include hate crimes committed with multiple bias motivations.



Other

This category consists of offences recorded under Article 119 para. 1 of the Criminal Code, which can include physical attacks or threats on persons due to protected characteristics. It also consists of offences recorded under Article 257 of the Criminal Code, which can include cases of racist or xenophobic breach of personal inviolability, as well as insults, which fall outside the OSCE's hate crime definition.

10

Attacks against places of worship

10

Physical assault

5

Threats/ threatening behaviour

2

Harassment

1

Damage to property

National Developments

In September 2024, the National Police Headquarters' Criminal Office organized a briefing devoted to the issue of bias-motivated crimes. The briefing was attended by representatives of: Criminal Office of the National Police Headquarters; Ministry of Interior and Administration; National Prosecutor's Office; Regional Prosecutor's Offices; Plenipotentiary of the Commander-in-Chief of the Police for Human Rights Protection; Central Office for Combating Cybercrime; barristers; representatives of Police schools; and heads of unit, together with co-ordinators on hate crimes who work in individual police garrisons. During the briefing, a wide array of issues was discussed, including: the interpretation of the constituent elements of bias-motivated crimes; the capabilities to detect perpetrators in cooperation with online platforms; as well as issues related to international obligations to prosecute and combat hate crimes.

In 2024, representatives of the Police, including the co-ordinators on hate crimes, participated in various conferences, government meetings, including the conference of the "Freedom Time" Foundation organized by the Ministry of Interior and Administration, and entitled: "Challenges of the 21st century – hate speech and crime in cyberspace".

On 12 June 2024, the Prosecutor General appointed a team of advisers on counteracting hate speech and bias-motivated crimes, tasked with drafting a systemic, comprehensive, and detailed strategy for counteracting and punishing hate speech and bias-motivated crimes. The team consists of prosecutors, academics, representatives of the Ministry of Justice, and lawyers.

Poland has developed a bill amending the Penal Code that aims to strengthen criminal law protection against discriminatory grounds for conduct on the basis of disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. The bill was adopted by the Council of Ministers, and the Sejm passed it on 6 March 2025. However, the Act has not entered into force because it has been referred to the Constitutional Tribunal by the President under the preventive review procedure.

Significant changes in the field of combating hate speech on the Internet have been proposed in the draft law amending the Act on the provision of electronic services and certain other acts. The draft law foresees, among other things, that the President of the Office of Electronic Communications 'blocks' illegal content on the Internet at the request of the person whose interest has been violated, or at the request of the Police or the prosecutor - if the dissemination of illegal content bears the hallmarks of a prohibited act or of a content praising or inciting to commit a prohibited act (as per Article 11a of the draft law).

Incidents reported by civil society

For 2024, ODIHR received reports of hate incidents in Poland from the following civil society organizations:

- Jewish Association CZULENT
- "Pro Futuro Theologiae" Foundation
- Ordo Iuris Institute
- The Gdańsk Centre for Equal Treatment (GCRT)
- We Are Monitoring Association
- International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF)
- European Association of Jehovah's Witnesses
- The Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe (OIDAC)

To learn more about these organizations, visit the Contributors page.

In addition, ODIHR also received reports of incidents from the Holy See as part of ongoing monitoring by their representatives. Some incidents were also recorded as part of ODIHR's ongoing monitoring across the OSCE region.

All incidents submitted by the above organizations have been analysed by ODIHR. Those that were broadly considered to be hate crimes within the OSCE definition (criminal offence committed with a bias motive) are listed in the tables below according to the bias motivation category. Some incidents involved multiple biases and may be listed in multiple categories.

ODIHR's insights

For 2024, ODIHR received reports of 152 incidents that took place in Poland in the following bias motivation categories: anti-Christian, anti-LGBTI, anti-Semitic, disability, gender-based, other religion or belief, and racist and xenophobic. In addition, several incidents involved multiple biases, such as anti-Semitic and gender-based, anti-Semitic and gender-based and anti-LGBTI, racist and xenophobic and anti-Christian, and racist and xenophobic and gender-based.

Anti-Christian incidents represented more than half of the total incidents in Poland reported to ODIHR. The majority of anti-Christian incidents reported involved damage to property or vandalism. However, a small number involved violent assaults on members of the clergy and, in a couple of incidents, congregations were threatened by intruders during church services or religious processions. Anti-Semitic incidents made up more than one quarter of the incidents reported in Poland, and involved vandalism or damage to community property including cemeteries, monuments, synagogues and community centres. ODIHR observes that several of the racist and xenophobic incidents reported targeted migrants, particularly Ukrainian or Russian-speaking people. In addition, several hate incidents were reported in which law enforcement officers physically assaulted, threatened or harassed migrants on the Polish border, accompanied by discriminatory language and actions.

A large number of anti-Semitic hate speech incidents were also reported to ODIHR; as these incidents fall outside of the OSCE definition of hate crime they have not been included in the tables below.

ODIHR observes that a low number of anti-LGBTI incidents were reported and ODIHR did not receive any reporting on Poland relating to anti-Roma or anti-Muslim incidents. Therefore, there are likely to be gaps in the information reported here.

Please note that incidents reported here are based on voluntary civil society submissions and as such might not reflect the actual number of incidents or the most targeted communities in Poland.

To address under-reporting, ODIHR encourages any civil society organizations or groups that monitor hate incidents to report these to ODIHR at hatecrimereport@odihr.pl.

To export an Excel sheet with summaries of all incidents from Poland click here and search by year and country.

View civil society incidents for Poland, 2024