



Islamophobic hate crimes

This brochure is intended for those who have been or are at risk of being subjected to hate crimes with Islamophobic motivation. You can learn more here about Islamophobic hate crimes, the rights that victims have, how to file a police report, and the support and help available.



Have you been the victim of a hate crime?

Being the victim of a crime can be a serious violation. Being the victim of a crime because of who you are makes the violation even more serious. If this has happened to you, you may well have been the victim of a hate crime.

In Sweden, unlawful discrimination and hate speech are considered as hate crimes. However, any crime can be a hate crime if the motive for the crime is to violate the identity of the victim. It can be based on:

- skin colour
- national or ethnic origin
- religion
- sexual orientation
- transgender identity/expression
- or other similar protected characteristics.

You do not even need to belong to any of these groups to become a victim of a hate crime. It is enough that the person committing the crime believes that you do – for example, that the person thinks you are a Muslim.

Hate crimes can attract harsher punishments

A person who commits a hate crime may receive a harsher punishment if convicted of the crime by a court. For example, a person who has threatened or assaulted someone can be sentenced to a harsher punishment if the crime is deemed to be a hate crime.

Hate crimes against Muslims

Islamophobia is a collective term for prejudice and hostility towards Islam and Muslims. It manifests itself in a similar way to anti-Semitism, xenophobia and other types of racism, in the form of acts that attack, exclude or discriminate against people because they are or are believed to be Muslims.

A common perception is that hate crimes always consist of a single serious incident in the form of punches and kicks, but it does not have to be that way. It can also be about threats and offensive comments, which are much more commonly experienced. It may also be that a person has been discriminated against when contacting a business or an authority.

Many victims of a hate crime have not reported the incident to the police and never even considered whether the incident could constitute a hate crime.

Hate crime or discrimination?

In everyday speech, the word “discrimination” is often used to refer to various types of unfair treatment. However, to constitute discrimination in law, the unfair treatment must be related to one of the grounds for discrimination. Within the meaning of the law, the unfair treatment can then be both unlawful discrimination and discrimination under the Swedish Discrimination Act.

Unlawful discrimination is a hate crime regulated in the Penal Code. You may have been the victim of a hate crime if, for example, you have been denied access to a place or service on the same terms as others. The persons who can be convicted of the crime of unlawful discrimination are entrepreneurs, public service employees, political representatives and organisers of public gatherings. To be convicted, the person must have intended to discriminate against you, and it

must be “established beyond reasonable doubt” that you have been discriminated against.

The Swedish Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination in working life, education and in several other societal settings. It applies to more situations than unlawful discrimination, and there is no requirement that the person who treats you differently does so intentionally. You may thus be entitled to damages even if the person did not intend to discriminate against you. It is more common for discrimination to be tried under the Swedish Discrimination Act than under the rules on unlawful discrimination.

Read more about discrimination at do.se

If you have been discriminated against, you can contact the Police Authority or the Equality Ombudsman. You can then get help and information about your rights.

Where do the crimes take place?

Hate crimes against Muslims can happen anywhere. They can take place in a home environment, at school, at work, online or in some other location. This may involve, for example, offensive words and harassment on the bus or metro, in shops or on streets and plazas. On the internet, Islamophobic hate crimes often take the form of hate speech, threats and other harassment.

Even non-Muslim people can be subjected to Islamophobic hate crimes, either because they are perceived as Muslim or are associated with Muslim people or issues. Examples of people at risk of being victimised in this way can include journalists, researchers and politicians. Islamophobic hate crimes can also be committed against buildings and places associated with Muslims.



Consequences of hate crimes

People who are victims of crime may react in different ways. For example, some react with shock, worry and fear, while others are less affected. In the longer term, exposure to crime can have consequences such as sick leave, depression and anxiety. This applies to all types of crime, and it is important that you seek help if you feel unwell.

Being a victim of a hate crime can have other consequences. For example, a person who has been victimised may begin to hide the fact that they are a Muslim, avoid certain places or stop engaging in politics or associations so as not to risk being a victim again. The crimes can lead to an increased sense of insecurity both for the victim and for others around them.

Hate crimes can also lead to deteriorating living conditions for Muslims in general. Muslims may feel that they do not have the same opportunities to take their place in society and in politics. Communities and associations may face financial problems as a result of an increased need for security measures.

Support and help

There are various types of support and help that you can get if you have been the victim of a crime. If you are a school pupil, you can turn to the school health services or to a teacher. If you work, you can turn to your employer or occupational health services. Schools and employers have an obligation to prevent and deal with violations.

You can always turn to various non-profit organisations that provide support and help, such as Victim Support Sweden (*Brottsofferjouren*). Victim Support Sweden has volunteers who speak many different languages and can support you if you don't speak much Swedish or if for other reasons you want support in your native language.

Victim Support Sweden

When you call 116 006, you will be connected to a counsellor who will direct you to your local victim support centre for further support. You can get support and help even if you have not reported the crime to the police, and you can choose to remain anonymous.

You can obtain healthcare through your health or medical care centre or an emergency department. If you need care or support, you can also visit the care guide [1177.se](https://www.1177.se) or call 1177 for guidance. It is possible to seek care even if it has been a while since the incident occurred.

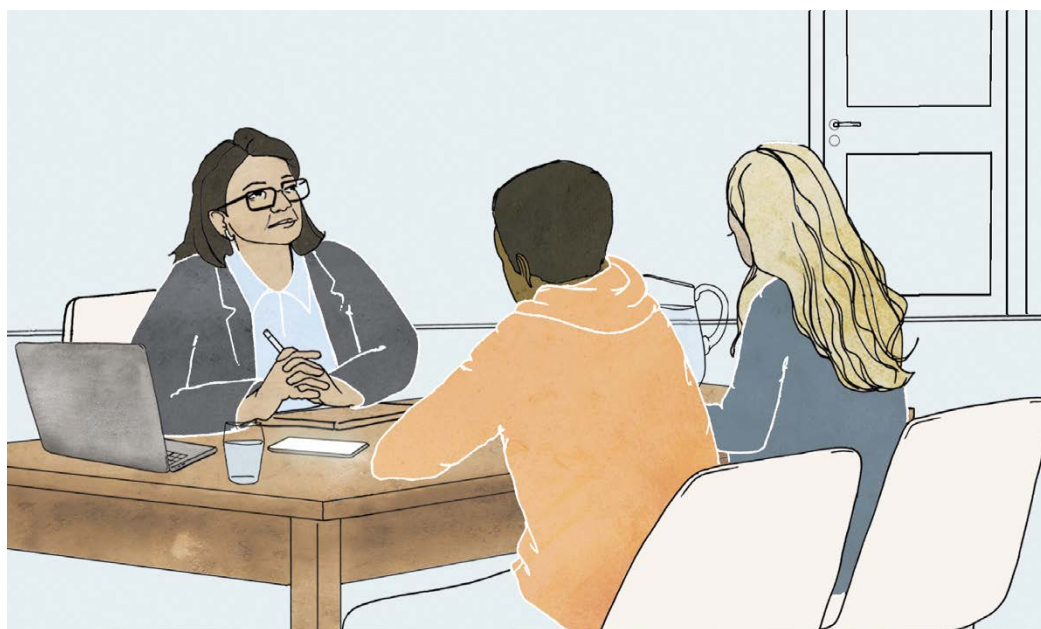
If you are a young person, you can get help through the Youth Guidance Centre and Social Services where you live. Some municipalities also have a support centre for young victims of crime you can turn to.

Social Services

The social services in the municipality where you live must work to ensure that anyone who has been the victim of a crime receives support and help. Your relatives can also get support and help from social services. The support that social services can provide may include support from someone to talk as well as other social support and practical help.

Get help from your support network

People around you, relatives and friends can help in many ways. What feels difficult can be easier to handle if you talk to someone you feel safe with. You may need help from your support network with practical things like contacting authorities if that feels overwhelming.



Reporting a crime to the police

If you have been the victim of a crime or feel that you need protection, you should contact the police. You can alert the police by dialling 114 14 or visiting a police station. If the threat is urgent, you should call 112.

When you report something to the police, it is important to give them as much detail as possible. You do not need to be certain that what happened was a hate crime; it is up to the police and the rest of the judicial system to decide. If motivation for a hate crime is detected as early as possible during the police investigation, the police will have better information to pass on to the prosecutor, who can then request a harsher sentence in court.

Signs that are helpful for the police to be aware of:

- Islamophobic insults uttered at the time of the crime.
- Graffiti, objects and symbols with anti-Muslim messages.
- The suspects' past actions, such as making anti-Muslim statements in the past.
- Other Islamophobic events that have occurred recently or nearby.

Police work to combat hate crime

The police work hard to establish as early as possible whether a crime has a hate crime motivation. Therefore, you will be asked at the time of reporting whether you believe there is any particular reason why the perpetrator committed the crime, such as racist or Islamophobic views. Another reason why the police ask about hate crime motivation is that it can contribute to a better picture of how widespread hate crimes are. The police also have designated hate crime investigators and hate crime specialists.

Remember: Sometimes the police investigation does not lead to an offender being prosecuted and convicted of the crime. This happens when there is not enough evidence to be able to continue the investigation and prove someone guilty. This does not mean that the police or the prosecutor do not believe what you have said. Your police report helps to show how widespread the crime is.

You may be entitled to compensation

If you have been the victim of a hate crime, you may be entitled to compensation for the harm done to you by the crime. The fact that the crime had hate crime motivation may entitle you to higher compensation.

Different types of compensation

You may be able to get:

- damages from the offender
- compensation from an insurance company
- compensation for criminal injuries paid by the Swedish Crime Victim Authority.

It is primarily the offender who must pay for the harm done by the crime, through damages. If you want damages, you should tell the police this when you are interviewed about the incident. Once the court has decided on damages, the offender must pay you the damages. The Swedish Enforcement Authority can help you recover the money.

You may be entitled to insurance compensation and compensation for criminal damage even if an offender is not convicted of the crime or if the offender is unable to pay the damages. Contact your insurance company and the Swedish Crime Victim Authority to find out what applies in your case.

You may be entitled to protection

If you are threatened or have been the victim of any other type of crime, you may be entitled to protection. It is therefore important that you tell the police what has happened and that you feel unsafe and afraid of being subjected to hate crimes again. The police carry out risk assessments, and support and possible protection are adapted based on these.

You can also apply for protection of your personal data, such as your home address. There are three levels of personal data protection: secrecy marking, protected population registration and fictitious personal data. You apply to the Swedish Tax Agency for secrecy marking and protected population registration. You can apply for fictitious personal data to the Swedish Police Authority.

Remember: Hate crime is not just an attack on the person who is the victim of the individual crime. It sends signals to the entire group to which the vulnerable person belongs and is an attack on our free society.

You can find more information at brottsoffermyndigheten.se.

The informationen in this brochure has also been translated into:

العربية – Arabiska

دری – Dari

English – Engelska

Kurmancî – Nordkurdiska (Kurmanji)

فارسی – Persiska (Farsi)

Romani-Arli – Romani

Af Soomaali – Somaliska

سۆرانی – Sydkurdiska (Sorani)

ትግርኛ – Tigrinja

Türkçe – Turkiska



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