



Brottsoffermyndigheten
Swedish Crime Victim Authority

Engelska



About hate crime



This brochure is aimed at people who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing hate crime. You can learn more about what hate crime is, what rights you have as a victim, how to report a crime to the police, and what public support, protection and help is available.

Have you been the victim of a hate crime?

Being the victim of a crime can feel like a serious violation. When the crime is committed because of who you are, the violation becomes even more serious. If this is the case, you may have been the victim of a hate crime.

In Sweden, unlawful discrimination and agitation against a population group are considered hate crimes. However, any crime can be a hate crime if the motive is to attack the victim's identity. This may be based on

- skin colour
- national or ethnic origin
- religious belief
- sexual orientation
- gender
- transgender identity or expression
- some other similar factor.

You do not need to belong to any of these groups to be the victim of a hate crime. It is enough for the person committing the crime to believe that you do or to associate you with issues relating to a vulnerable group. Hate crimes might be directed at private individuals, but also journalists, researchers and politicians who are involved in public debate, for example.

Hate crimes may also be directed at buildings and places associated with religious or cultural groups, such as synagogues, mosques and community centres.

Hate crime may be subject to a harsher penalty

A person who commits a hate crime may be given a more severe sentence in court. A threat or assault, for example, can lead to a harsher punishment if it is judged to have been a hate crime.

Where do these crimes occur?

Hate crimes can happen anywhere. They can occur at home, at school, at work, on the internet or in other places. The common factor in all hate crimes is that they are usually based on a view that certain groups are superior and others inferior. However, anti-Semitic hate crimes might express the view that Jews are a superior group with considerable influence and power in society.

The crimes may take many different forms. Hate crimes against Sámi people, for example, might involve violence or vandalism targeting reindeer herders.

Afro-Swedes, Roma and LGBTQI+ people may be subjected to violence and harassment simply for being in a public place. Religious hate crimes may include pulling off head scarves or the spread of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories online.

It is a commonly held view that hate crimes are always individual acts of serious violence, but this is not necessarily the case. Hate crimes consisting of threats or offensive comments are much more common. They might also involve a person being discriminated against in their dealings with a business or public agency.



Hate crime or discrimination?

The word ‘discrimination’ is often used in everyday language to describe various types of unfair treatment. However, in order to constitute discrimination under the law, the unfair treatment must be related to one of the protected grounds of discrimination. In the eyes of the law, unfair treatment can therefore be both unlawful discrimination and discrimination under the Swedish Discrimination Act.

Unlawful discrimination is a hate crime governed by the Swedish Penal Code. You may have been the victim of a hate crime if, for example, you are denied the opportunity to shop or access a place or service on the same terms as others. Only business operators and organisers of public gatherings or events can be convicted of unlawful discrimination. In order to be convicted, the person must have had the intention to discriminate, and it must be ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ that you have been discriminated against.

The Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination in working life, education and several other areas of society. It also covers discrimination based on age and disability, and does not require that the person who discriminates against you does so intentionally – you may therefore be entitled to compensation even if the person did not intend to discriminate against you. Discrimination is more commonly prosecuted under the Discrimination Act than under the rules on unlawful discrimination.

Find out more about discrimination at do.se

If you have been discriminated against, you can contact the police or the Equality Ombudsman (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen). You can also contact your local anti-discrimination office (antidiskrimineringsbyrå) for help and information about your rights and what action you can take.

Consequences of hate crime

People's reaction to being a victim of crime can vary. Some react with shock, nervousness and fear, while others are less affected. Over the longer term, being a victim of crime can lead to sick leave, depression and anxiety. This is the case for all types of crime, and it is important to seek help if you are suffering ill-health.

” I’m afraid of it happening again. I sleep badly and feel stressed, even when I’m at home. ”

Being a victim of a hate crime can also have other consequences. For example, a victim may start to hide their religious affiliation, avoid certain places or stop getting involved in politics or community life to avoid being targeted again. Suffering hate crime online can drive people to change the way they express themselves or to simply stay silent. In addition, such crimes can lead to an increased sense of insecurity, for the victim and for the people around them.

Hate crime can also lead to a deterioration in living conditions for people more widely. Members of vulnerable groups may feel that they lack the same opportunities to participate in society or politics. Congregations, clubs and community groups may suffer financial problems due to the need for heightened security.

Help and support

Various kinds of help and support are available for victims of crime, and you should be informed about how to access this when you report a crime.

If you are at school, you can turn to the pupil health team or speak to a teacher. If you are working, you can contact your employer or occupational health service. Schools and employers are responsible for preventing and dealing with incidents in schools and workplaces.



You can also get help from charities such as Victim Support Sweden (Brottsofferjouren Sverige), who offer support and information to victims of crime, witnesses and their families. They have volunteers who speak many different languages and can provide support even if you do not speak Swedish or would prefer to receive support in your native language for some other reason. Call 116 006 to speak to an advisor, who will refer you to your local victim support centre for further help. You can access help and support even if you have not reported the crime to the police, and you can choose to remain anonymous.

” You should never be afraid to ask for help. What you’ve been through is serious and can really affect you. ”

If you have been the victim of a crime and need care or support, you can contact your health centre or a hospital emergency department. You can also visit the website 1177 Vårdguiden or call 1177 for advice and guidance. You can seek help even some time after the incident occurred.

If you are under 18, you can get help from your local youth clinic or online. Some municipalities also have support centres for young crime victims, where you can get support, advice and practical help.

Social services

Social services in your municipality should offer support for victims of crime, with this support available to both the victim and their family. The support offered by social services may include counselling, social support and practical help.

Get help from the people around you

Relatives, friends and other people in your life can help in many ways. Talking to someone you feel safe with can make a difficult situation easier to deal with. You might need to ask them to help you with practicalities such as contacting the authorities, if it feels too overwhelming.

Reporting a crime to the police

If you have been the victim of a crime or feel you need protection, you should contact the police. You can report the crime by calling 114 14 or visiting a police station. In an emergency, always call 112.

When reporting a crime to the police, it is important to provide as much information as possible. If a hate crime motive is established early on in the police investigation, the police will be able to submit a better case to the prosecutor, and this may lead to a more severe sentence in court. When reporting a crime to the police, you do not need to know for sure whether what happened was a hate crime, but do say if you think it might be. It is then up to the police and the judicial system to determine whether a hate crime was committed.

” To be honest, I wasn’t sure at first. But the police treated me really well and took me seriously. ”

Useful information for the police:

- Insults said during the incident.
- Graffiti, objects and symbols with messages of hate about a particular group.
- The suspects' previous actions, such as making offensive statements about a particular group.
- Other recent incidents in the area involving hateful and discriminatory acts.
- If the crime took place online, take screenshots so you have images, comments or posts saved somewhere.

Police work against hate crime

The police will want to establish as early as possible whether a crime may have been motivated by hate. When reporting the crime, you may therefore be asked whether you think there is any particular reason why the perpetrator committed the crime. Another reason why the police ask about the hate crime motive is that it can help to paint a better picture of how common hate crimes are. The police have special investigators and experts who specialise in hate crime.



Remember: It is possible that the police investigation will not lead to a prosecution and conviction, because there is not enough evidence to continue the investigation and prove who is guilty. This does not mean that the police or the prosecutor do not believe you. Reporting your experience to the police is important and helps to show how common this kind of 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 damage caused, and if the crime was motivated by hate, you may be entitled to higher compensation.

Different types of compensation

You may be able to get

- damages from the perpetrator
- an insurance payment
- criminal injuries compensation from the Swedish Crime Victim Authority.

In the first instance, the perpetrator must pay the compensation for the damage caused by the crime. If you want to claim damages, you should tell the police when you report the incident. If the court decides that you are entitled to damages, the perpetrator must pay the compensation to you. You can turn to the Swedish Enforcement Authority for help in collecting damages.



You may be entitled to insurance payments and criminal injuries compensation even if the perpetrator has not been convicted of the crime or is unable to pay the damages. Contact your insurance company or companies and the Swedish Crime Victim Authority to find out what applies in your case.

You are entitled to protection

If you have been threatened or subjected to any other type of crime, you may be entitled to protection. It is therefore important to tell the police what happened, especially if you feel unsafe or are afraid of the incident happening again. In certain cases, victims of crime or those at risk of crime may be able to have their identity protected. There are three types of protected identity:

- confidentiality marking
- protected Population Register data
- new identity details.

For confidentiality marking and protected Population Register data, you will need to contact the Swedish Tax Agency. The agency will usually require some form of supporting documentation from the police or social services. Applications for new identity details must go through the police. An individual assessment is always made to determine whether protected identity will actually have an effect.

Remember

A hate crime is not just an attack on the individual victim. It sends a certain message to the wider group to which the victim belongs and is an attack on our free and open society.

” Being hated for who I am hurts in a way that can’t be seen. ”



For more information, go to **brottsoffermyndigheten.se**

The information in this brochure has also been translated into:

- Arabic
- Dari
- English
- Finnish
- Yiddish
- Northern Sámi
- Kurmanji
- Lule Sámi
- Meänkieli
- Persian
- Romani Chib/Arli
- Turkish
- Somali
- Sorani
- South Sámi
- Tigrinya



Brottsoffermyndigheten

Swedish Crime Victim Authority

Box 470, 901 09 Umeå

Phone: 090-70 82 00

registrator@brottsoffermyndigheten.se

www.brottsoffermyndigheten.se