

Hate Crimes Across Durham On The Rise

Durham - Just recently the RCMP alerted the public over a man who made threats to a Pickering mosque.

A male is facing charges after making online threats toward a mosque in Pickering.

Hate crime in Durham has surged 77 per cent (see below) between 2023 and 2024, according to Region of Durham.

On Wednesday, January 28, members of the Hate Crime and Extremism Unit received information from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) about threats made to the Ahmadiyya Durham Mosque Baitul Mahdi located at 3505 Salem Road in Pickering.

The suspect was identified and arrested on Thursday, January 29, 2026 at a residence in Toronto without incident. The 65-year old suspect from Toronto was released on an undertaking.

"We recognize the significant impact these types of incidents have on our community, particularly among members of the Muslim communities. Acts that target or instill fear in any group are unacceptable and

we remain committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone in our community.

We are working closely with community leaders to provide support and reassurance, and we stand firmly against hate, discrimination, and intolerance in all forms," said a police statement.

"Hate Crime" is not a standalone charge in the Criminal Code of Canada; instead, if a crime is motivated by hate, that factor can be considered during sentencing to increase the severity of the penalty.

Hate-motivated crimes in Durham Region have increased by 77 per cent from 2023 to 2024, according to the Region of Durham.

It released the statistic while announcing that it has partnered with Victim Services of Durham Region (VSDR) to launch Community-Based Hate Reporting Program — a first of its kind in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

"Recent headlines highlight a troubling surge in hate-motivated crimes across Durham Region," said a region statement. Some of the headlines the region

has seen recently according to the Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) are:

Ajax grapples with second hateful vandalism incident

Oshawa home defaced with anti-LGBTQ2S+ slurs

Police investigating Oshawa swarming attack advocates say may have been hate-motivated

Witnesses sought after three hate-motivated graffiti incidents at Whitby libraries

The new program — to be officially launched later this month — consists of an online hate reporting tool (even for situations that don't meet the threshold of criminality), wrap-around services and support for individuals who have experienced acts of hate, the region said.

Individuals can report incidents anonymously and there is no requirement to involve law enforcement, it added.

In response to recent high-profile hate activity, the Region of Durham has partnered with Victim Services of Durham Region (VSDR) to launch a Community-Based Hate Reporting Program—the first of its kind in the Greater Toronto Area.

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Area.

Developed in consultation with human rights and religious organizations, as well as local community service providers, the program, which is being run by VSDR and offered in multiple languages, consists of an online tool that allows individuals to securely and confidentially report incidents of hate—even those that do not meet the threshold of criminality.

In addition to reporting, individuals who have experienced acts of hate can access wrap-around services, including immediate crisis response, counselling, practical assistance, and referrals for additional support. The program also accepts both anonymous reporting and witness-submitted reports to enhance data collection, which will help inform future strategies and provide more accurate aggregate data to uncover trends and patterns of behaviour about hate incidents in Durham Region.

Fast facts:

Hate-motivated crimes/incidents in Durham Region increased by 77 per cent from 2023 to 2024. This program aligns with the

Durham Regional Police Service Hate Crime Unit, offering an alternative for those may not be comfortable, or are unable to report directly to police.

Research shows hate activity is significantly under-reported. According to Statistics Canada's 2019 General Social Survey, Canadians self-reported over 223,000 hate-motivated incidents in one year, yet only 22 per cent were reported to police. Barriers to reporting include language challenges, fear of retaliation, normalization of hate, and uncertainty about where to report.

Community-based hate reporting programs have been successfully implemented internationally and locally, including in Hamilton, Waterloo, Chatham-Kent, and Ottawa, but the program is the first of its kind in the Greater Toronto Area.

The Community-Based Hate Reporting Program builds on the Region's other anti-hate initiatives, including Together Against Hate Durham, a three-phased campaign that launched in October 2025. It provides educational tools and resources so municipalities, organizations,

institutions, and individuals can take meaningful action against hate in all its forms.

A Community Healing Toolkit is also being created for community leaders and ambassadors throughout Durham Region and offers trauma-informed and culturally affirming guidance for restoring well-being, healing and resilience following a traumatic incident.

"In Durham Region, diversity is one of our greatest strengths—and it's essential to protect. The Community-Based Hate Reporting Program is one of the ways we can do that. By partnering with Victim Services of Durham Region on this initiative, we can increase safety and inclusion, while providing invaluable supports. When we act together, we increase trust, connection and a shared sense of belonging while sending a clear message that hate has no home here."

- John Henry, Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer, Region of Durham

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AI - Summarize of last week Dean Hickey column February 3rd, 2026 Eciton



Dean Hickey's column titled "A Political Convention and a Host of National Issues", published online by Central Newspapers (The Central Online) on January 31, 2026 (with print editions likely following shortly after), is a commentary piece typical of his straightforward, opinionated style on Canadian political affairs. The column centers on the Conservative Party of Canada's national policy convention held in Calgary from January 29-31, 2026. This was a significant event as it marked the party's first in-person gathering since 2023, involving debates on policy updates, party constitution changes, and notably a leadership review for Pierre Poilievre (triggered by the Conservatives' loss in the prior federal election to the Liberals under Mark Carney). Hickey uses this convention as a hook to critique or analyze broader national issues facing Canada at the time. Key themes and points from the column (based on its promotion and context across local Oshawa/Durham community shares on Facebook groups like The Central Online - News & Views Worth Sharing and Our Oshawa): Focus on the Conservative Convention: Hickey discusses the atmosphere, key discussions, delegate sentiments, and outcomes (or anticipated ones) from the Calgary event at the BMO Centre. It highlights Poilievre's leadership scrutiny, with emphasis on party achievements like flipping ridings in recent elections, while weighing internal divisions or optimism for future directions.

Tie-in to National Issues: The piece expands beyond the convention to address a "host" of pressing Canadian concerns. These likely include economic challenges (e.g., inflation, taxes, cost of living), political polarization, federal-provincial tensions, immigration/policy debates, or critiques of the Liberal government (e.g., economic management, middle-class impacts). Hickey's writing often leans toward conservative-leaning commentary, pointing out perceived failures in national leadership or policy while noting Conservative efforts or alternatives.

Local/Regional Angle: As a columnist for a Durham/Oshawa-focused publication, he may connect these national topics to local implications for Ontario communities, such as economic effects on the GTA region or political representation.

The column was widely shared by admins (including Dean Hickey himself in group posts) in local Facebook communities around late January/early February 2026, often with captions positioning it as timely reading amid ongoing political developments. It appears to be reflective and critical, aligning with Hickey's pattern of unfiltered takes on politics, similar to his other pieces on party declines, taxes, or year-end reviews. Since the full verbatim text isn't directly accessible in public web snippets (primarily teased via Facebook shares without complete copy-paste of the article body), the piece serves as insightful local commentary on a pivotal moment in Canadian conservative politics. For the complete read, check The Central Online's Facebook group posts from January 31, 2026, or their site ocentral.com (though it may require group membership or direct search for archives). If you have access to the print edition or a specific excerpt, share more details for a deeper dive!

What do you think of this Artificial Intelligence summarization over last week Joe Ingino editorial?
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