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/cyprus

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

2024

Summary

Cyprus has regularly reported hate crime data to ODIHR since 2018. In February 2022, the Cyprus Police and Ministry of the Interior organized a workshop on understanding and improving hate crime recording and data collection in co-operation with ODIHR and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. The workshop was based on ODIHR's Information Against Hate Crimes Toolkit (INFAHCT), and resulted in a set of recommendations for relevant state authorities.

Hate crime data are collected annually and published online by the Cyprus Police and its Human Rights and Combating Discrimination Office.

In 2017, the Cyprus Police signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights with 14 civil society organizations. The purpose of the Memorandum was to further improve and deepen co-operation between the parties for the protection and promotion of human rights.

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

ODIHR's Key Observation

ODIHR recognizes the efforts of Cyprus to strengthen the Cyprus Police's capacity to identify, record and investigate hate crimes. However, based on the available information, it observes that Cyprus' hate crime recording and statistics do not adequately distinguish hate crimes from other crimes. In addition, ODIHR observes that Cyprus would benefit from raising awareness among and building the capacity of prosecutors to prosecute hate crime.

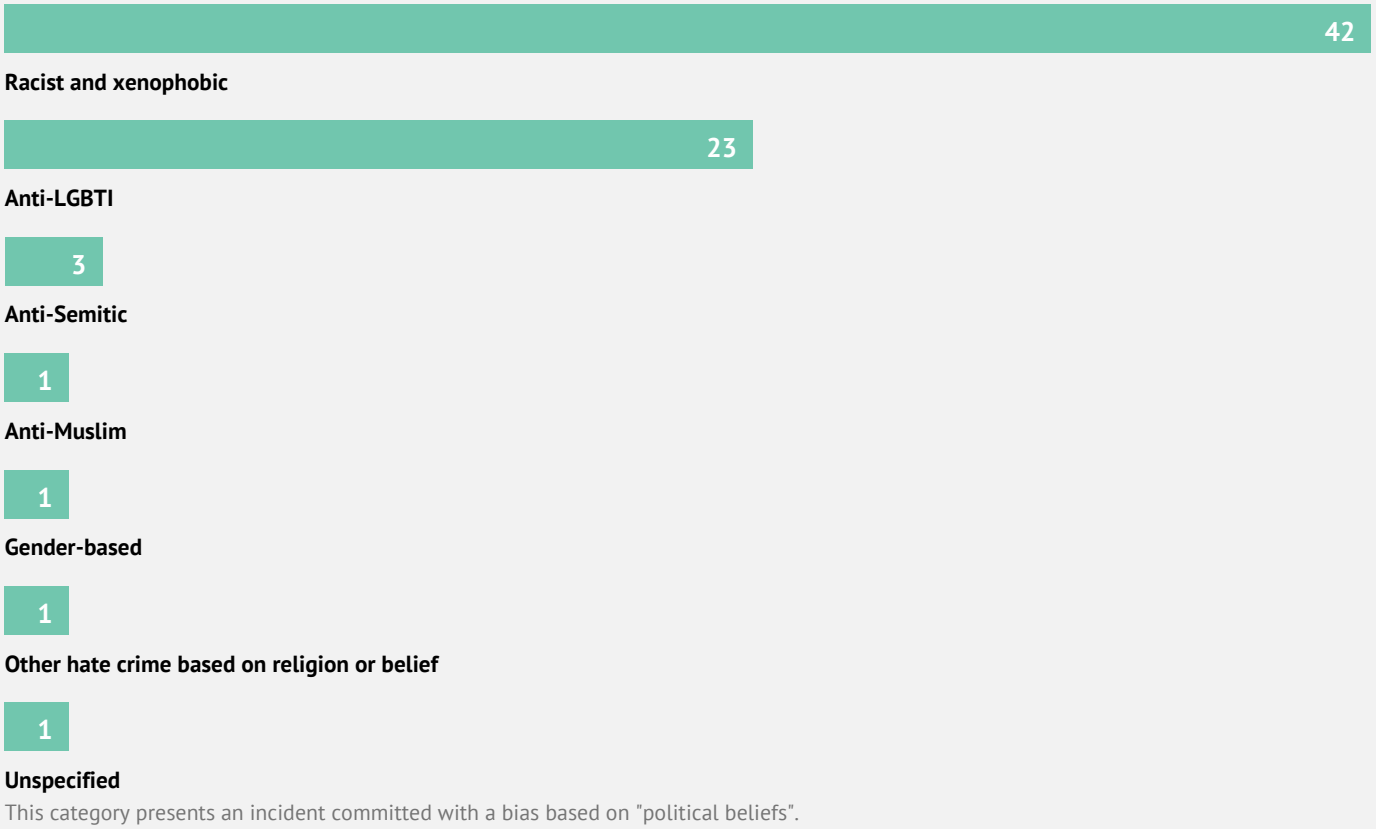
Official Data

The police-recorded figure includes 24 incidents that were recorded but not investigated, in addition to 30 criminal cases. One case may include more than one type of crime. The number of prosecuted cases represents the number of cases filed with the courts. The numbers presented here include hate speech offences, which fall outside the OSCE definition of hate crime but cannot be disaggregated.

Year	Hate crimes recorded by police	Prosecuted	Sentenced
2024	54	30	2

Police data by bias motivation

In the breakdown below, more than one motivation and more than one criminal offence can be recorded for a single incident; therefore, the total number below exceeds that of the recorded incidents presented in the table above.
Three types of crime categories are included in the recording process: assault against a person, assault against property, and verbal assault/hate speech/threats.
The data below may also include incidents of hate speech (under the type of crime "threats"), which fall outside the OSCE definition of hate crime.



This category presents an incident committed with a bias based on "political beliefs".

Police data by type of crime

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Threats/ threatening behaviour

This category corresponds with the recorded category "verbal assault/hate speech/threats." As such, it may include instances of hate speech, which fall outside the OSCE definition of hate crime.



Physical assault

This category corresponds with the recorded category "assault against a person."



Damage to property

This category corresponds with the recorded category "assault against property."



Other

National Developments

In 2024, Article 99A of the Penal Code was amended to increase penalties for incitement (violence or hatred on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity). The amendment raised the prison sentence from 3 to 5 years and increased the fine from €5,000 to €10,000.

Cyprus is preparing a strategy on preventing and combating anti-Semitism, based on the EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life. The country is also preparing a strategy on the protection of the rights of persons belonging to the LGBTI+ community.

In 2024, the following training programmes were organized in the Cyprus Police Academy :

- "Combating Discrimination and Racism and Respect of Human Rights", held on 1 January 2024. The training was attended by approximately 30 police officers responsible for investigating racist cases.
- "Respect for the diversity of each person", held on 9 May, 4 September 2024, and 14 November 2024. The trainings were attended by approximately 60 members of the Police. These trainings were co-organized with the NGO "ACCEPT LGBTI Cyprus".
- "Combating Xenophobia and Racism and Respect for Human Rights", was held on 24 September 2024. The training focused on investigating racist offences and was attended by 22 police officers.

In 2024, the Cyprus Police undertook the following actions:

- Established an Office for Human Rights and Combating Discrimination, which handles policy issues on combating discrimination and maintains statistical records concerning the investigation of complaints/criminal cases involving racist offences, among other activities. The investigation of racist offences is carried out by Police Departments, the Criminal Investigation Departments (CID), and the Cybercrime Division.
- Issued a Police Standing Order titled "Management of Offences and Anti-Discrimination Issues," which includes the legislative framework for racist offences and regulates the recognition, investigation, and recording of these offences.
- Appointed 12 liaison officers for combating discrimination (two in each District Department), with experience in investigative duties. In particular, these officers are responsible, *inter alia*, for coordinating and supervising the investigation of complaints concerning incidents/cases of discrimination or other related hate crimes, ensuring that the Human Rights and Combating Discrimination Office is immediately informed.
- Developed a form for reporting racist offences/incidents and related hate offences. The form must be completed by the police officer receiving a complaint related to an offence/incident with a racist motive.
- Developed a questionnaire for use as a guide for identifying incidents or offences related to discrimination or other related hate crimes. The questionnaire is intended to assist members of the police investigating complaints related to hate crimes.
- Included the principle of equal treatment without discrimination in the Code of Police Ethics. The Code was uploaded on the Police Portal and the official website, and was printed as a booklet distributed to all members of the Police.
- Circulated letters to all members of the Police concerning human rights and issues relating to discrimination, xenophobia, and racism. In particular, in 2024, a circular letter was issued regarding racial profiling, emphasizing, among other things, that the detainment, search, and detention of any individual based solely on their ethnic origin or other distinct characteristics are prohibited. Additionally, the Handbook of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) titled "Preventing Unlawful Profiling Today and in the Future: A Guide" was distributed to Police Departments for awareness

and use.

- Prepared a "Human Rights Handbook", which includes a separate chapter on tackling racism, xenophobia and intolerance. The purpose of the manual is to inform and raise awareness of human rights among members of the Police.
- Established a Human Rights Day, with conferences focusing on themes related to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Incidents reported by civil society

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

- Human Rights Platform
- European Association of Jehovah's Witnesses
- Queer Cyprus Association

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

In addition, some incidents were reported by UNHCR as part of their ongoing monitoring.

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 13 incidents in Cyprus in the following bias motivation categories: racist and xenophobic, anti-LGBTI, and anti-Christian. In addition, one incident involving both racist and xenophobic *and* anti-LGBTI bias motives was reported.

ODIHR observes that while a low number of incidents were reported in Cyprus, several of the racist and xenophobic incidents targeted foreign nationals, including physical assaults and robberies of delivery drivers. Other racist and xenophobic incidents included threats on social media against schoolchildren and teachers due to their perceived foreign nationality. In one notable case, a human rights organization working on anti-racism and migrants' rights was targeted in a bomb attack following prior threats from far-right groups. Finally, ODIHR noted that all reported anti-LGBTI incidents involved physical assaults, including repeat attacks on LGBTI pride march participants.

It should be noted that ODIHR did not receive any reporting on Cyprus relating to anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, anti-Roma, gender-based, other religion or belief, or disability hate incidents. This indicates potential 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 Cyprus.

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

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

View civil society incidents for Cyprus, 2024