

WHERE TO REPORT?

Hate crimes should be reported to the **State Police** as soon as possible by calling **110** or contacting the nearest **police station**.

The victim must describe what happened to the police officer in as much detail as possible, paying attention to **the special indicators of hate crimes**, such as the fact that the attacker has expressed racist, xenophobic, homophobic, etc. notes or slogans, the attacker had special clothing or inscriptions on it, tattoos with various symbols, etc.

Hate speech can also be reported to the **State Police** by submitting a written application or to the **State Security Service** by writing to **info@vdd.gov.lv**.

Hate speech on the Internet can be reported to the administration of a particular website by using the reporting tools or by writing to mentioned contact email.

WHERE TO SEEK ADVICE OR HELP:

Latvian Center for Human Rights provides free-of-charge consultation and legal assistance. To apply fill out the online reporting form:
<https://cilvektiesibas.org.lv/lv/database/repor-t-hate-crime/>

or by writing to office@humanrights.org.lv

or by calling +371 67039290

Psychological support for crime victims is provided by the **"Skalbes" crisis and counseling center** by calling 116006, more information: www.cietusajiem.lv

REPORT HATE CRIMES AND HATE SPEECH

Scan to open
reporting form



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**REPORT HATE
CRIMES
AND HATE
SPEECH!**

What is a hate crime?

Who is the target
of a hate crime?

What is hate speech?

What makes hate speech and
hate crimes dangerous?

Where to report?

WHAT IS A HATE CRIME?

Hate crime is a criminal offense **motivated by prejudice or hatred** against a person or a group of people, based on **skin color, nationality, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability**, and similar features.

Hate crimes can be: physical attack, threats or insults (both verbal and written), theft or robbery, rape, damage to property, desecration of graves and other criminal offenses if motivated by hatred or aimed at incitement to hatred.

E.g.: A person is beaten in the street just because of dark skin color.

E.g.: On the eve of a conference on the Holocaust, vandals mark Jewish gravestones with swastikas.

E.g.: The tires of the car are punctured just because it has a Ukrainian license plate.

WHO IS THE TARGET OF A HATE CRIME?

Most often, hate crimes are directed against minorities or vulnerable groups. At the same time, they **can be directed against any person because of belonging to a certain group**. Hate crimes can target not only an individual who belongs to a group, but also an individual who **is perceived, according to the attacker, as a group member or support one of the above-mentioned social groups**.

E.g.: The windows of the coffee shop are broken just because it is owned by a Muslim.

E.g.: A man who publicly supports the rights of the LGBTQI+ community is threatened with physical harm if he continues to do so.

WHAT IS HATE SPEECH?

Hate speech is understood as **all types of expression** that incite, promote, spread or justify violence, hatred or discrimination against a person or group of persons, or that denigrates them, due to their **race/skin color, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation**, and similar features.

Hate speech is illegal if it contains:

- **public calls for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or the justification, trivialization or denial of these crimes**

E.g.: spreading information that the Holocaust did not happen or questioning commonly known facts about it.

- **public calls for violence, hatred or discrimination**

E.g.: calling for violence against asylum seekers

- **threats to a person or a group of persons**

E.g.: a gay man is threatened with violence if he does not move to live elsewhere.

- **ideas based on racial superiority or hatred**

E.g.: spreading neo-Nazi publications about the superiority of the Aryan race over other people

- **dehumanization of a group of people**

E.g.: dark-skinned people are compared to animals

- **Infringement of honor and dignity or defamation**

E.g.: spreading false information about a Roma politician that he is a thief because all Roma steal.

WHAT MAKES HATE SPEECH AND HATE CRIMES DANGEROUS?

Hate speech and hate crimes are dangerous because **they attack the core of a person's identity**, which is made up of characteristics such as age, gender, skin color, nationality, religious beliefs, physical and mental abilities, sexual orientation, etc.

Hate speech and hate crimes are dangerous because they convey **a message** not only to the person directly targeted, but to all members of a particular group, that they are not wanted in this society, that they do not deserve certain rights, and that they are less valuable than other members of society.

Hate speech and hate crimes are also dangerous because they can **cause long-term psychological damage to victims**, affecting not only the victim himself, but the community to which it belongs, as well as the wider society. Verbal abuse **divides society and can escalate into regular attacks, and lead to wider disturbances**.

WHICH LAWS DEFINE LIABILITY?

Article 78 of the Criminal Law of Latvia stipulates criminal liability for actions aimed at inciting national, ethnic, racial or religious hatred.

Article 150 of the Criminal Law of Latvia stipulates criminal liability for actions aimed at inciting social hatred depending on a person's gender, age, disability or any other characteristics.

Article 48 (1) 14) of the Criminal Law of Latvia defines racist, national, ethnic or religious motives or social hatred as an aggravating circumstance.

Article 21 (5) of the Law on Administrative Liability stipulates that violations motivated by hatred against such distinctive characteristics of a person as race, religious belief, nationality or other clearly identifiable distinguishing characteristics of a person are aggravating circumstances in cases of administrative violations.