HATE CRIME

VICTIMIZATION SURVEY

REPORT

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REPORT

Paul Iganski

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Organization for Security and
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Mission to Skopje

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

◆ This report provides key findings from the second wave of North Macedonia hate crime survey carried out in June and July 2023. The first wave was carried out in 2018.

◆ Using the same questions in both waves, the survey aims to provide a more comprehensive account of potential hate crime and incident victimization than is available from the numbers of hate crimes indicated by official and NGO data for the country.

◆ A key objective is to provide evidence to assist in guiding the development of effective measures that respond to and combat hate crimes, as well as to support advocacy efforts by civil society organizations.

SURVEY DESIGN

◆ The 2018 survey wave aimed to maximise the potential to capture participants' experience of hate crime victimization. The aim of the 2023 wave of the survey was to achieve a more representative sample of respondents based on the recent 2021 population census.

◆ A total of 1510 respondents from the 18 most ethnically diverse municipalities were selected for the 2018 sample on the understanding that rates of hate crime are greater in areas with greater population diversity. The 2023 wave of the survey covered 67 municipalities in total and recruited a sample of 1614 respondents.

◆ Both waves of the survey employed a quota sampling design.

◆ Tablet assisted self-interviews (TASI) were conducted in which respondents completed a survey questionnaire using a tablet computer provided by the interviewer.

◆ Respondents were recruited in public places at locations and times chosen to sample a cross-section of the population.

POTENTIAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION

◆ The survey findings about potential crime victimization in general reveal a striking similarity in victimization rates for 2018 and 2023.

◆ There are some indications of movement in the direction of a small decline in the overall victimization rates for crimes in general

◆ The victimization rates for most of the specific crimes asked about in the survey appear to have declined very slightly since 2018, but most of the differences do not evidence a change when judged by standards of statistical probability.

POTENTIAL HATE CRIME VICTIMIZATION

◆ The survey findings about potential hate crime victimization indicate a far higher prevalence than suggested by official and NGO data, for both waves of the survey.

◆ There has been no change in the overall rate of potential hate crime victimization between 2018 and 2023.

- The potential hate crime victimization rate for the 2023 participants as a group from the 2018 survey municipalities is higher than the overall rate for 2023 survey respondents from other municipalities and there is no evident change in the victimization rate since 2018. This supports the rationale for the selection of municipalities in 2018 that areas with greater ethnic diversity will experience greater hate crime victimization rates.

- The pattern of perceived different bias motivations for hate crimes and incidents is also similar between the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey. However, there is one notable difference from the 2018 survey. The proportion of potential hate crimes and incidents with a perceived political bias has declined.

- Strangers were the most common single type of hate crime perpetrator.

- Very few hate crime victims said that the perpetrator was a member of an extremist group.

VICTIMIZATION BY VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

- The 2023 survey indicates no difference in the overall crime victimization rates between women and men. However, it potentially shows a reduction in the overall crime victimization rate for men compared with the 2018 survey.

- Women and men experienced no difference in the overall rate of potential hate crime and incident victimization in the 2023 wave of the survey. The same was the case in 2018. There is also no evident change in the potential hate crime and incident victimization rates for women and men between the two surveys.

- A higher proportion of respondents with a disability from the 2018 municipalities in the 2023 wave of the survey were more likely to report having been a victim of a potential crime or incident in the previous 12 months compared with respondents with a disability in the 2018 wave of the survey.

- The same is the case for potential hate crime and incident victimization—indicating increases between the two waves of the survey.

- Potential hate crime victimization rates have remained static between the two waves of the survey for Albanian respondents as a group and also for Macedonian respondents.

- However, for potential crime victimization in general, there has been a decline in the victimization rate for Albanian respondents as a group since 2018 while the rate has remained static for Macedonian respondents.

REPORTING TO THE POLICE

- Potential crimes and incidents with a perceived bias motivation are more likely to be reported to the police for some crime types—verbal assaults and vicarious victimization—compared with those without bias motivation.

POST-VICTIMIZATION AND WORRY ABOUT POTENTIAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION

- Hate crime victims as a group were over twice as likely as victims of other crimes to report having significant problems with family members or friends as a consequence of their experience of hate crime.

- Hate crime victims as a group were more likely to report post-victimization psychological impact than victims of other crimes.

◆ There is a downward trend in worry about potential crime victimization between 2018 and 2023. This is the case for each indicator of worry for respondents who had not been victims of crime and those who had been victims of crimes or incidents not perceived to be bias motivated in the previous 12 months.

◆ There is also a down trend in worry about potential crime victimization between 2018 and 2023 for victims of hate crimes and incidents on most indicators.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides the results from the second wave of the North Macedonia hate crime survey carried out in June and July 2023. The first wave of the survey in 2018 was unique. It was the first survey that sought to capture the experience of potential hate crime victimization in the country. It was also the first hate crime survey for the non-EU countries in the Balkan region. The second wave continues the pathbreaking contribution of the survey to understanding hate crime in North Macedonia. It provides an up-to-date account of the prevalence of potential hate crimes. And it enables an evaluation of potential change since 2018.

The survey provides a more comprehensive account of potential hate crime victimization in the country than is possible from available official and NGO data—by assessing the experiences of a range of different communities of majority and minority social identity based on ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and political beliefs.

A key objective is to provide evidence to assist in guiding the development of effective measures that respond to and combat hate crimes, as well as to support advocacy efforts by civil society organizations.[1] A comparison of the findings from the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey also informs the evaluation of measures taken during the last five years to address the problem of hate crime.

The report is organized into eight sections. Following this introductory section, some key methodological issues about the design of the survey and the data analysis are outlined to inform interpretation of the survey results. Separate sections are then provided on: the prevalence of crime victimization; the prevalence of hate crime victimization; hate crime victimization by victim characteristics; reporting to the police; and worry about crime. The survey's findings from 2018 and 2023 are compared throughout the report, with comments provided about any changes observed. The final section presents the conclusions of the report.

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[1] The OSCE ODIHR proposes that: "Tools that measure unreported hate crimes and their impact on victims can provide a better indication of the true volume of hate crimes, as well as valuable information about the impact of hate crimes on victims. They can identify specific communities at risk and provide information about changing patterns of violence. They can help assess the level of community confidence in the police and other criminal justice agencies. All of this knowledge can help improve planning, preventive action and response." *Hate Crime Data-Collection and Monitoring Mechanisms. A Practical Guide,* (2014: Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR, page 33).

2. SURVEY DESIGN

SAMPLE DESIGN

The 2018 wave of the survey aimed to maximise the potential to capture participants' experience of hate crime victimization. The sample was selected from the 18 most ethnically diverse municipalities on the understanding that rates of hate crime are greater in areas with greater population diversity.[2] The aim of the 2023 wave of the survey was to achieve a more representative sample of respondents based on the recent 2021 population census.[3] The 2023 wave, therefore, included the 18 municipalities from the 2018 survey but extended the reach of the survey to cover 67 municipalities in total.

Both waves of the survey employed a quota sampling design. Budgetary constraints limit the potential for a national random sample survey—even before the availability of appropriate sampling frames for such a survey is considered. The costs escalate when seeking to survey a range of different communities of majority and minority social identity—which is another aim of the hate crime survey.

Quota sampling provides a cost-effective design for sample selection. It can also be a very reliable design when repeating surveys over time, as shown by comparisons in this report of the findings from the two waves of the hate crime survey.

SAMPLE SELECTION

The size of the sample of respondents in each municipality, and the regions in which municipalities are located, was proportionate to the municipality and region population as a percentage of the total population for the country. For the sample quotas:

◆ The sample for each municipality was divided proportionately according to the ethnic group composition of the municipality (Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Roma, Vlachs, Serbs, Bosniaks, and others).

◆ In each municipality, 60% of the sample in the 2023 wave of the survey were men and 40% women (in 2018, 75% were men and 25% women. The aim of the over-representation of men was to seek to capture as comprehensive a picture of crime victimization as possible given that men are slightly more likely than women to be victims of violent crime in public places and public order offences—the types of crimes that commonly become aggravated as hate crimes.

◆ Younger age groups were also over-represented compared to older age groups in both waves of the survey—also to seek to capture as comprehensive a picture of potential crime victimization as possible. Young adult men are most likely to be victims of violence with a declining victimization rate with age. In the 2023 survey, twice the national population proportion of 15-19-year-olds, 20-24-year-olds and 25-29-year-olds, were selected; an equal national population proportion of 30-39-year-olds; and half the national population

2   Iganski, P. (2007) *Hate Crime and the City,* Bristol, UK: Policy Press. (See Chapter 3: 'The spatial dynamics of everyday hate crime', Bristol: Policy Press, pages 45-71.

3   Republic of North Macedonia State Statistical Office (2022) *Total Resident Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of North Macedonia, Census 2021*, Skopje: Republic of North Macedonia State Statistical Office, https://www.stat.gov.mk/publikacii/2022/POPIS_DZS_web_EN.pdf

proportion selected for the older age groups. The same proportions by age were selected in the 2018 wave of the survey.

FIELDWORK

The fieldwork for both waves of the survey was carried out by the local company BRIMA[4]—with approximately 51 Macedonian and Albanian speaking interviewers with previous experience for the 2023 wave.

Interviewers approached 1,792 persons for the 2023 wave of the survey: 178 refused to be interviewed (10%) and 1,614 respondents aged 15 and over participated in the survey. The refusal rate for the 2018 wave was slightly higher at 12.9%.

The following recruitment statement was used in both waves of the survey:

◆ Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is_____ and I work for BRIMA. We are currently conducting research aimed at gaining an understanding of the prevalence of crimes that victims believe are motivated by the perpetrator's hatred or prejudice against them. You will be asked about reasons such as: ethnic, racial, or national origin, specifically because of religious affiliation, specifically because of physical or mental disability, specifically because of sexual orientation and gender identity, and specifically because of political beliefs. We choose the person at random. Survey responses are strictly confidential, in accordance with international research standards. Your personal data listed in this Questionnaire will be processed by BRIMA DOO Skopje, in accordance with the Law on the Protection of Personal Data, and for the purposes of this research.

Given the sensitive nature of some of the survey questions, tablet-assisted self-interviews (TASI) were conducted in which participants completed a pre-coded survey questionnaire using a tablet provided by the interviewer. Routing through the questionnaire followed the respondent's answers. The questionnaire was available in either the Macedonian or Albanian language. Interviewers were present to address any queries from respondents concerning any clarification needed about question wording.

Interviews were conducted throughout the day including early evenings and weekends to capture potential respondents who were in daytime employment or at school or college.

Respondents were recruited in public places at locations chosen to achieve a cross-section of the population—next to or near railway stations, bus stations, post offices, medical centres and hospitals, shopping centres and cinemas. Interviewers were also instructed to go to specific places or neighbourhoods where they could find their target groups—such as minorities or people from specific ethnic groups, and particular age groups, for instance—to fill their quotas.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Prior to conducting the fieldwork for the 2018 survey, a pilot was undertaken of the respondent recruitment and questionnaire completion under the same conditions as planned for the survey. The same questionnaire was used in both the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey. The questions were organised into five modules—the respondent's:

◆ Demographic information.

◆ Worries about crime.

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4   See: https://www.kantartns-see.com/locations-in-south-east-europe/north-macedonia/

◆ Experience of potential crime victimization—focusing on 11 different specific types of crime.

◆ Most serious potential crime experienced.

◆ Impact of the most serious potential crime experienced.

A reference period of the previous 12 months prior to the interview was used for all questions concerning the experience of crime.

DEFINING 'HATE CRIME' IN THE SURVEY

'Hate crime' is defined by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) as "criminal acts motivated by bias or prejudice towards particular groups of people."[5] These two components of a hate crime—a criminal offense and bias motivation—are also specified by the North Macedonia Criminal Code (amended 2018). It states that a: "Crime of hate… is committed wholly or partially due to a real or speculative (imaginary, assumptive) characteristic or association of the person and relates to the race, skin color, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or conviction, mental or bodily disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and political conviction." (Article 122 [42]). These 'characteristics', or 'associations', of persons were used for the measurement of potential hate crime in the 2018 and 2023 waves of the North Macedonia hate crime survey.

For each of the eleven specific crime types asked about in the survey,[6] respondents who indicated that they had been a victim of the crime in the last 12 months were asked further questions about whether they thought it had happened partly or completely because of their:

◆ Ethnic, racial, or national background.

◆ Religious background.

◆ Political beliefs.

◆ Sexual orientation or gender identity (if they had indicated that their sexual orientation was other than 'heterosexual').

◆ Physical or mental health condition or illness (if they indicated that they had a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more).

Additionally, for the most serious crime respondents specified when questioned, they were further asked: 'Do you think…(it)…happened partly or completely because you are a woman?'

Offenses associated with positive responses to any of these questions are classified in this report as 'potential hate crimes and incidents', and other offenses not perceived to be bias motivated are referred to as 'potential crimes and incidents'.[7] The use of the word 'potential' recognizes that in practice, verification is ultimately provided by the courts. Furthermore, the addition of the word

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5   https://hatecrime.osce.org/

6   The 2018 survey analysis used eight of the eleven specific crime types. The analysis of the 2023 data uses all eleven specific crime types asked about in the survey to seek to capture all hate crimes and incidents noted by respondents without exclusion. All comparisons of potential crime and incident victimization between the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey use the eleven specific crime types.

7   Under the 2018 North Macedonia Criminal Code, penalty enhancement in cases involving hate motivation was additionally included for: Murder (Article 123); Coercion (Article 139); Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment (Article 142); Sexual assault of a helpless person (Article 187); Sexual assault upon a child who has not turned 14 years of age (Article 188); Armed robbery (Article 238); Extortion (Article 258); Causing hatred, discord or intolerance on national, racial, religious or any other discriminatory ground (Article 319); Participation in a crowd which commits crime (acts of violence) (Article 385); Spreading racist and xenophobic material via information system (Article 394-d); Approving or justifying genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes (Article 407-a); Racial or other discrimination (Article 417);

'incidents' acknowledges that not all occurrences of victimization noted by the survey respondents will amount to crimes as defined by the North Macedonia Criminal Code. It is not possible to legally verify from the survey data whether incidents noted by respondents qualify as crimes under the law. But this is in common with crime victimization surveys internationally.

PRESENTATION OF THE SURVEY RESULTS IN THIS REPORT

Weighting was applied in the calculation of the survey results to correct the 2023 sample statistics according to population parameters for ethnic group, gender, age, regions, and urban/rural location, according to the 2021 census, using RIM weighting. The 2018 sample was weighted according to the 2002 census data. All results presented are weighted results—apart from when counts of actual crimes experienced are presented. As is conventional when reporting weighted sample survey findings, weighted percentages, and unweighted numbers of respondents (n) from which the percentages are derived, are presented for the results reported.[8]

There is a consensus among social researchers that the non-random selection of respondents through quota sampling prevents generalization of the survey findings beyond the survey's participants. This is because population estimates, or generalization of findings, are underpinned by the premise of random sampling, as such an approach avoids sample selection bias. Quota sampling is thought to be biased toward people who are willing, easy to reach, and interested in the subject matter.[9] This is problematic if they differ as a group from the rest of the population concerning the subjects of the survey.

Even though the weighting of the 2018 and 2023 waves of the hate crime survey adjusted the samples to more closely resemble the populations from which the samples of respondents were drawn, the premise of random sampling is still that results from non-probability quota samples cannot be generalized.

However, the weighted survey findings presented in this report are testimony to the strength of the quota sampling design used for the survey. On many questions asked of respondents, the results of the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey are remarkably similar. Therefore, the survey results can be interpreted as being potentially indicative of the wider population beyond the survey participants—which will be the interest of many readers of this report.

To help interpret the survey findings, certain conventions are followed based on the reporting of results from probability surveys. As results based on a small number of responses in a survey are less reliable than others, the practice used by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) in reports on the EUMIDISII survey[10] is adapted for this report:

◆ Results based on 20 to 49 unweighted numbers of respondents in a group total or based on cells with fewer than 20 unweighted respondents are noted in parentheses.

◆ Results based on fewer than 20 unweighted respondents in a group total are not presented (with just a few exceptions—for indicative purposes—which are noted where applicable).

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8   For the logic of this approach see: Tim Bock 'The Correct Treatment of Sampling Weights in Statistical Tests' DISPLAYR, https://www.displayr.com/the-correct-treatment-of-sampling-weights-in-statistical-tests/ Last accessed: 16.08.23.

9   For a useful review of the academic literature on this topic, see: Keming Yang and Ahmad Banamah (2014) 'Quota Sampling as an Alternative to Probability Sampling? An Experimental Study', *Sociological Research Online*, 19(1), pp. 56-66: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.5153/sro.3199

10 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey. Main Results (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2017, Page 116): https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2017-eu-midis-ii-main-results_en.pdf

Because sample surveys only interview a fraction of the population, they are subject to sampling error. Tests of statistical significance are conventionally applied to survey results to determine whether observed differences between population groups should be considered as actual differences in the total population—with a 95% probability within the range of statistical variation.

Given that the North Macedonia hate crime survey results are derived from a non-probability quota sample, however, tests of statistical significance are not routinely provided for the results presented in this report—as a key assumption behind significance testing is that the results are based on a random sample of respondents. However, to help the interpretation of some key observed differences between sub-groups of respondents, or between the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey, comments are provided about whether those differences would be confirmed by tests of statistical significance if the samples were probability samples.

3. CRIME VICTIMIZATION

OVERALL VICTIMIZATION RATES

To gain an understanding of the prevalence of hate crime, participants were asked about potential crime victimization in general, and then about any perceived bias motivation for the potential crimes and incidents experienced. Consideration of this general experience of crime first in this section provides a useful context for examining the findings about hate crime in the next section of the report.

As a starting point for asking about experiences of crime victimization in general, all respondents in the survey were asked: 'Have you been a victim of a crime during the past year in this country?'. Almost a quarter (24%) of participants in 2023 responded that they had been a victim of crime, compared with a third (33%) in the 2018 wave of the survey. Some of the differences are removed when focusing only on respondents from the eighteen municipalities covered by the 2018 wave of the survey. Nevertheless, a difference still remains as 28.4% of the 2023 participants from the 2018 municipalities stated that they had been the victim of a crime in the past year. On this broad measure then, there are indications of a possible decline in the overall rate of potential crime victimization since 2018. This would appear to fit the small downward trend in crime in the last few years as indicated by official statistics on the number of adult perpetrators of crimes—although the most recent number for 2022 is only marginally lower than in 2018.[11]

To enable a closer understanding of respondents' victimization experience, further survey questions about crime victimization were confined to eleven different types of offense.[12] The eleven offense categories were originally selected for the 2018 survey as a Ministry of Justice working group had at the time proposed amendments to the Criminal Code to incorporate penalty enhancement for each of the offenses in cases where hate motivation was involved.[13] To enable comparability between the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey, specific questions about the same eleven offense categories were retained for the 2023 wave and used for comparison of potential victimization rates.

For the eleven offense categories combined, 22.5% of the 2023 participants reported experiencing at least one potential crime or incident in the 12 months before the survey—again lower than the 2018 wave of the survey where 32.2% of participants reported experiencing at least one of the eleven types of crime. The difference is reduced noticeably, however, for the 2023 participants from the eighteen 2018 survey municipalities—28% for 2023, although the remaining apparent difference does indicate a small change between the two surveys for the eleven offense categories combined when judged by standards of statistical probability.

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11   State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia https://www.stat.gov.mk/IndikatoriTS_en.aspx?id=6 (last accessed: 21.08.23)

12   "Has someone stolen your property or robbed you during the past year?" (CV1); "Has someone threatened your safety during the past year?" (CV2); "Has someone insulted or verbally assaulted you during the past year?" (CV3); "Has someone physically assaulted you (excluding robbery) without causing bodily injury during the past year?" (CV4); "Has someone physically assaulted you (excluding robbery) causing bodily injury during the past year?" (CV5); "Has someone sexually assaulted or raped you during the past year?" (CV6); "Has someone unlawfully deprived you off your liberties during the past year?" (CV7); "Has someone damaged your property during the past year?" (CV8); "Have you been affected by someone desecrating a grave during the past year?" (CV9); "Have you been affected by someone preventing or disturbing a public gathering during the past year?" (CV10); "Have you been refused medical help when needed, during the past year?" (CV11).

13   Under the subsequently amended Criminal Code of the Republic of North Macedonia, the eleven offense categories are covered by: Bodily injury (Article 130); Severe bodily injury (Article 131); Unlawful deprivation of liberty (Article 140); Threatening the safety (Article 144); Prevention or disturbance of public gathering (Article 155); Rape (Article 186); Not providing medical help (Article 208); Burglary (Article 236); Robbery (Article 237); Damage to objects of others (Article 243); Act of violence (Article 386); Desecration of a grave (Article 400).

TYPES OF CRIME EXPERIENCED

Verbal attacks

A verbal attack of some form or another was the most likely type of victimization reported by respondents in 2018 and 2023. All respondents were asked "Has someone insulted or verbally assaulted you during the past year?". Insults are incorporated into the crime of 'Acts of violence' (Article 386) of the Criminal Code (amended 2018), which specifies that: "Whosoever maltreats, roughly insults, endangers the safety or performs rough violence upon another, and herewith causes a feeling of insecurity, threat or fear among the public, shall be sentenced to imprisonment of three months to three years.". It is not possible to determine how many respondents were insulted "roughly" (the threshold for insults as specified in the criminal code) because the manner of the insults was not asked about in the survey. However, in using the survey question's broad measure of insult or verbal assault, well over 1-in-20 (7.8%) of the 2023 respondents noted that they had experienced an insult, with some insults possibly counting as crimes, rising to 1-in-10 (10.1%) for the 2023 survey participants from the 2018 municipalities compared with 11.7% for the 2018 survey (Figure 1). In terms of statistical probability, however, the small apparent difference remaining does not represent a change between the two waves of the survey.

Figure 1: Percentages of respondents who experienced at least one insult, verbal assault, or threat to safety in the last 12 months
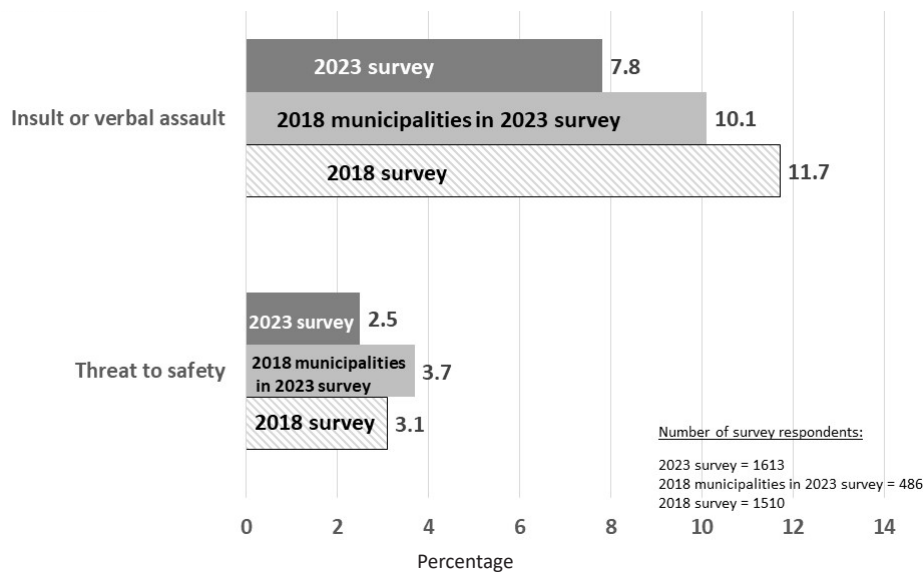
Threats are specifically covered by the crime of "Threatening the safety" (Article 144) according to the Criminal Code. It states that: "Whosoever threatens the safety of another, by serious threat to attack his life or body or life or body to a person closely related to him, shall be fined or sentenced to imprisonment of six months." The seriousness of any threat experienced was not asked about in the survey. Broadly, all respondents were asked: "Has someone threatened your safety during the past year?". Using this broad measure, a small fraction, 1-in-40 respondents in 2023 noted that they had experienced a potential criminal threat. The victimization rate is higher (3.7%) for the 2023 respondents from the 2018 survey municipalities. But the apparent difference compared with the 2018 wave of the survey concerning the experience of threats does not evidence a change between 2018 and 2023 when judged by standards of statistical probability."

Property crime

The second most common category of offense experienced by respondents involved having their property stolen or being robbed, or their property damaged. Under the Criminal Code (amended 2018), these offenses are covered by the crimes of 'Burglary' (Article 236), 'Robbery' (Article 237) and 'Damage to objects of others' (Article 243). Approximately 1 in 20 respondents in the 2023 wave of the survey experienced at least one of these types of crime (Figure 2). In the case of having property stolen or robbed, there is a possible notable decline in the potential victimization rate between the two surveys as almost 1-in-10 respondents in 2018 noted having their property stolen or robbed in the previous 12 months. The small decline in the rate of property damage does not evidence a change between 2018 and 2023 when judged by standards of statistical probability.

Figure 2: Percentages of respondents who experienced at least one property crime in the last 12 months
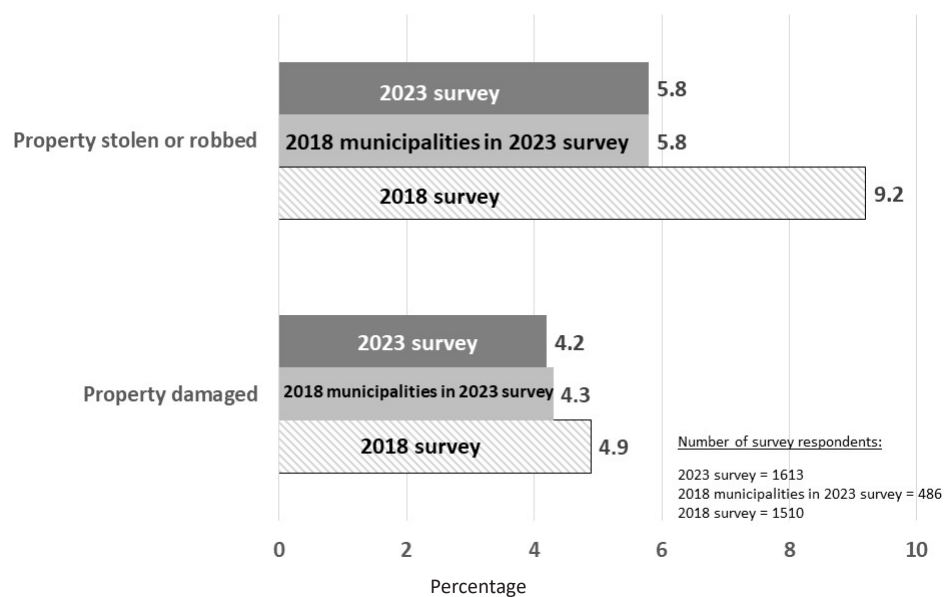
Refusal of medical help

According to Article 208 of the Criminal Code (para.1): "A doctor or any other health worker who contrary to his duty does not provide immediate medical assistance to a person whose life is in danger, or the crime is committed out of hatred, shall be fined or sentenced to imprisonment of up to one year."

Figure 3: Percentages of respondents refused medical help when needed at least once in the last 12 months
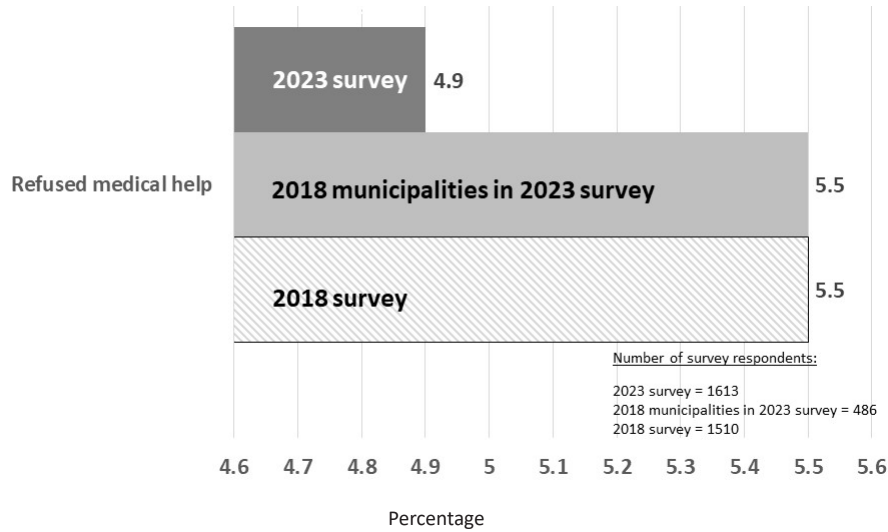
Just over 1-in-20 (5.5%) of respondents in the 2023 wave of the survey from the 2018 municipalities, and an identical proportion from the 2018 wave, indicated that they had been refused medical help when needed in the previous 12 months (Figure 3). While the Code refers to the refusal of medical assistance to a person whose life is in danger, all respondents in the survey were asked more broadly: "Have you been refused medical help when needed, during the past year?". With reference to the Article's inclusion of the commission of the crime "out of hatred," respondents who indicated that they had been refused medical help were further asked about any perceived bias motivation behind the possible offense—as discussed in the next section of this report.

Physical and sexual assaults

All respondents in the survey were asked: "Has someone physically assaulted you (excluding robbery) without causing bodily injury during the past year?", and "Has someone physically assaulted you (excluding robbery) causing bodily injury during the past year?". Physical assaults with or without injury are outlawed by various Articles of the Criminal Code, including: 'Bodily injury' (Article 130), 'Severe bodily injury' (Article 131), and 'Act of violence' (Article 386).

Figure 4: Percentages of respondents who experienced at least one physical or sexual assault in the last 12 months
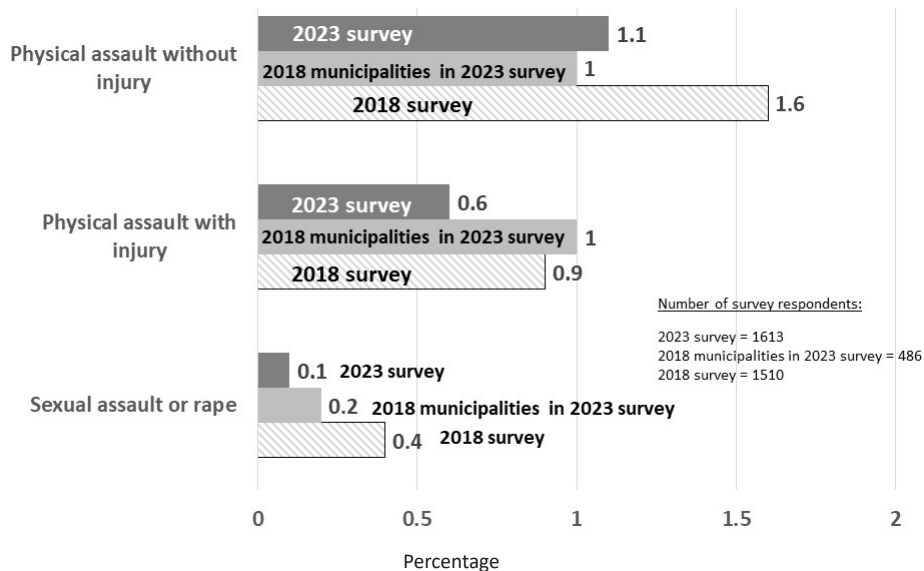
Respondents were further asked: "Has someone sexually assaulted or raped you during the past year?". The crime of rape is covered by Article 186 of the Criminal Code and sexual assault by several provisions of the Code. The Criminal Code also specifies sexual offences against children, although these were not a subject in the survey as the target respondents were aged 15 years and above.

Notably, very few of the survey respondents reported being physically assaulted, with or without resultant injury, or sexually assaulted (Figure 4). Despite some small apparent differences, by standards of statistical probability there is no change in the potential victimization rates between 2018 and 2023.

Deprivation of liberty

The unlawful confinement, and deprivation or limitation of the freedom of movement of persons is specified by Article 140 of the Criminal Code. All respondents in the survey were accordingly asked: "Has someone unlawfully deprived you of your liberties during the past year?"

Figure 5: Percentages of respondents unlawfully deprived of their liberty at least once in the last 12 months
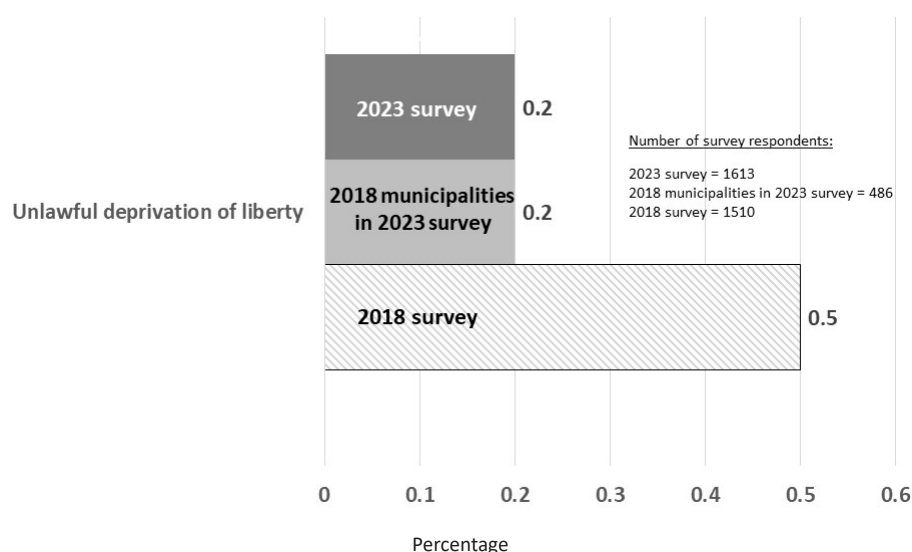
Notably, only a very small proportion of respondents in the 2023 and 2018 waves of the survey stated that they had been unlawfully deprived of their liberty in the previous 12 months (Figure 5). The victimization rates for 2018 and 2023 do not differ by standards of statistical probability despite the small apparent difference.

Vicarious victimization

Each of the offense categories discussed to this point involves direct victimization of persons or their property. Two other offenses asked about in the survey can be considered to involve 'vicarious victimization' whereby persons are affected indirectly by actions that are not taken against them personally or against their personal property. Two such offense types were included in the survey. The first is the crime of 'Desecration of a grave' (Article 400). All respondents were asked: "Have you been affected by someone desecrating a grave during the past year?". The second offense type where vicarious victimization was asked about concerns the crime of 'Prevention or disturbance of public gathering' (Article 155). According to the Criminal Code this involves the prevention or disturbance of the "calling up or organizing peaceful public gathering…by force, serious threat, fraud

or in any other manner." For this type of offense, all survey respondents were asked: "Have you been affected by someone preventing or disturbing a public gathering during the past year?".

The purpose of these questions about vicarious victimization was to seek to gain a picture of further potential offenses that sometimes involve bias motivation that are not amenable to capture in population crime victimization surveys because they don't involve direct interpersonal victimization of respondents or their personal property. Nevertheless, illuminating their occurrence is important as such crimes can potentially have an indirect impact on persons by fuelling a sense of insecurity.

Figure 6: Percentages of respondents who experienced vicarious victimization at least once in the last 12 months
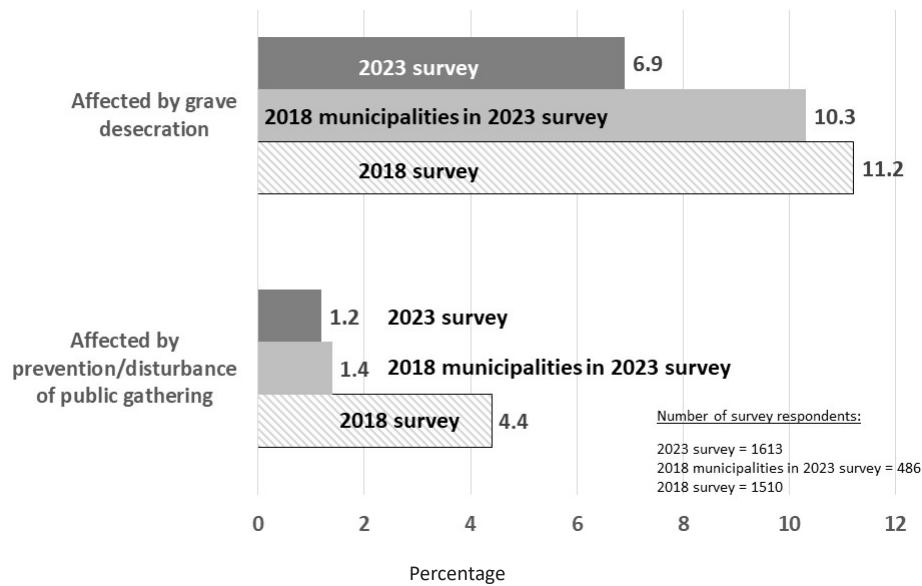
Approximately 1 in 10 respondents from the 2018 municipalities in the 2023 wave of the survey stated that they were affected by the desecration of a grave in the previous 12 months (Figure 6). This proportion is slightly less, but not different statistically, than in 2018. Much smaller proportions of respondents in 2023 stated that they were affected by the prevention or disturbance of a public gathering, and statistically, this is a potential decline compared with the 2018 wave of the survey.

CONCLUSIONS: COMPARING OVERALL CRIME VICTIMIZATION RATES FOR 2018 AND 2023

This first section of the research findings concerning potential crime victimization in general reveals a striking similarity in victimization rates for 2018 and 2023. It is not evident that there are any sharp differences in findings between the two waves of the survey. However, when overall potential crime victimization rates are considered for all crimes combined, there are indications of a small decline between 2018 and 2023. In the case of specific crimes asked about in the survey, at first sight, the victimization rates for most appear to have declined very slightly since 2018, but in most instances the differences do not evidence a change when judged by standards of statistical probability. The next section of this report continues the comparison between the two waves of the survey with respect to hate crime victimization.

4. HATE CRIME VICTIMIZATION

OVERALL HATE CRIME VICTIMIZATION RATES

Using the classification of potential hate crimes and incidents outlined in the 'Survey design' section of this report, just under one in ten (8.5%) respondents in the 2023 survey said that they had been a victim of some form of potential hate crime or incident in the previous 12 months. The victimization rate increases to 14.7% for the 2023 participants as a group from the 2018 survey municipalities. It is very close to the 15.2% of the 2018 survey participants victimized by potential hate crimes or incidents, and when judged by standards of statistical probability, it does not represent a change in the potential hate crime or incident victimization rate between the two waves of the survey.

HATE CRIME AND INCIDENT VICTIMIZATION BY CRIME TYPE

Hate crime and incident victimization rates differ considerably between the different crime types covered by the survey (Figure 7). The most common type of potential hate crime or incident experienced by respondents involved an insult of some form. While the evidential indicators of many crimes will be obvious to persons affected—such as a threat, a physical assault, theft and damage of property, damage and desecration of graves, or the prevention or disturbance of a public gathering— the indicators of a criminal insult will not be so obvious. As noted in the previous section of this report, insults are outlawed under 'Acts of violence' (Article 386 of the Criminal Code [amended 2018]) in circumstances where a person "roughly insults" another. However, as also noted, the survey did not inquire about the manner or intensity of insults, and it therefore cannot be determined how many involved 'rough' insults. It is quite possible, therefore, that many of the bias-motivated insults noted by the survey respondents amount to incidents of incivility rather than crimes under the law.

Figure 7: Percentages of respondents who experienced at least one potential hate crime or incident in the last 12 months by crime tipe
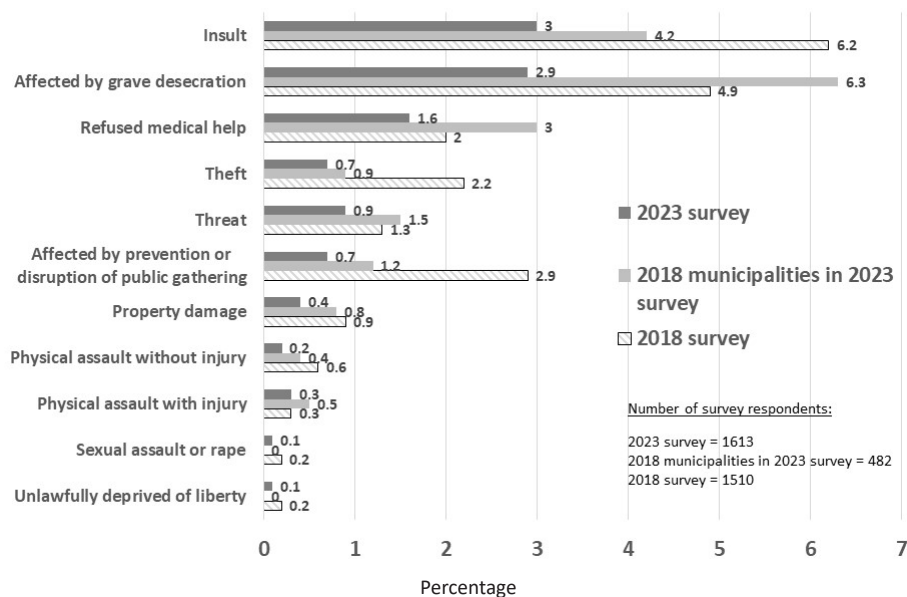
Being affected by damage, or desecration of a grave, was the second most frequent potential hate crime or incident experienced by the survey respondents. While 'being affected' is not the crime itself, it serves as a useful indicator, as each person affected points to the occurrence of a crime specified by the criminal code.

Overall, when comparing the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey, there is no evident singular pattern of change concerning the rates of perceived bias motivation by crime category—as would be expected given that there is no evident change between 2018 and 2023 in the overall rate of potential hate crime and incident victimization. While there is an evident decline in the rate of bias motivated insults since 2018, other apparent differences either do not evidence a change between the two surveys when judged by standards of statistical probability, or the numbers of respondents are too small for reliable comparison.

NUMBERS OF HATE CRIMES AND INCIDENTS

Given that the 2018 and 2023 waves of the North Macedonia hate crime survey differ in terms of the number of respondents and the number of municipalities covered by the survey, it would not be useful to compare the actual numbers of potential hate crimes and incidents noted by respondents in both waves. However, it is instructive to make a comparison between the 2023 survey numbers and official and NGO figures. The comparison indicates the true prevalence of hate crimes and incidents beyond these figures.

According to data published by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), just 22 hate crimes were recorded by the police in North Macedonia for 2021[14]—the most recent year for which published data are available (with 125 prosecutions that year).[15] This number is a decline from the 33 incidents recorded for 2018.[16] Data from non-governmental sources indicate a larger number of hate crimes. The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights registered a total of 160 (what it terms as) 'hate crimes/incidents' for 2022, primarily based on monitoring crime reports in the print and electronic media—as noted in their most recently published annual hate crime report.[17] For 2018, 123 hate crime incidents were registered.[18] Beyond these figures, the North Macedonia hate crime survey captures a higher number of hate crimes and incidents, and points to the occurrence of a much higher number still. Using actual unweighted numbers, 172 hate crimes and incidents were experienced by respondents at least once in the past year (Figure 8), and some respondents were victimised more than once. This total exceeds the numbers captured by official and NGO data. The difference becomes stark when it is considered that the 172 potential hate crimes and incidents captured by the 2023 survey are based on the victimization experience of only 1,614 respondent members of the North Macedonia population—indicating a far higher prevalence of hate crime victimization if the whole population is considered.

14 ODIHR notes that: "The 22 cases reported by police involved 21 perpetrators. The figures may include cases of hate speech and discrimination, which fall outside of the OSCE's hate crime definition." https://hatecrime.osce.org/north-macedonia

15 For the prosecution data, ODIHR notes that: "The records on prosecuted cases represent cases pending before Basic Courts; of the total number, 118 cases are pending before the Basic Criminal Court in Skopje." ibid.

16 ibid.

17 Natasha Petkovska (2023) *Annual Report on Hate Crimes in 2022,* Skopje: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, page 84.

18 Hajdi Shterjova-Simonovikj & Sanja Barlakowska Velkov (2019) *Annual Report on Hate Crimes in 2018,* Skopje: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Page 6.

Figure 8: Numbers of potential hate crimes and incidents by crime type: 2023 survey

n (unweighted)

Property crime
Theft or robbery = 14
Property damage = 7

Verbal assault
Insult = 44
Threat = 19

Refused medical help
Refused medical help = 17

Vicarious victimization
Affected by grave desecration = 45
Affected by prevention/
disturbance of public gathering = 14

Physical & sexual assault
Physical assault with injury = 6
Physical assault without injury = 3
Sexual assault or rape = 2
Unlawful deprivation of liberty = 1

Refused medical help, 17
Property crime, 21
Verbal assault, 63
Physical & sexual assault, 12
Vicarious victimization, 59

Total number of hate crimes and incidents experienced at least once by respondents = 172 (unweighted)

In the police-recorded hate crime data published by ODIHR for North Macedonia, no indications about the types of hate crime experienced are provided. However, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights notes that for the potential hate crime offenses it registered for 2022, the great majority involved physical violence (116 cases of 'violence' and 26 cases of 'bodily and severe bodily harm').[19] Despite this, only a very small proportion of the potential hate crimes and incidents reported in the 2023 North Macedonia hate crime survey involved physical violence either with or without resultant injury (the same is the case for 2018).[20]

BIAS MOTIVATION

The number of potential hate crimes and incidents by crime type just discussed is determined by two factors: the frequency of occurrence of the underlying crime (discussed in the previous 'Crime victimization' section of this report) and the proportion of the underlying crimes perceived to be bias motivated—in other words, the hate crime victimization rate for each crime type. It is instructive here to focus on the proportions of each underlying crime perceived to be bias motivated.

To simplify a comparison of potential hate crime victimization rates between the different crime types, it is useful to use the five major crime groupings or categories of crime used in the previous section of this report to discuss crime victimization in general. Vicarious victimization appears to be the most likely crime category for victims to note bias motivation (Figure 9)—although the underlying crimes were noted slightly less frequently by survey respondents than verbal assaults, which appear to be the next most likely crime or incident perceived to be bias motivated. However, when using standards of statistical probability, there is no difference between these rates of perceived bias motivation. Property crime was the least likely crime category for victims to note bias motivation.

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19   ibid., page 85.

20   Paul Iganski (2020) *Hate Crime Victimization Survey,* Skopje: OSCE Mission to Skopje, page 17, figure 3.

Figure 9: Proportions of victims noting bias motivation by crime category

Number of respondents (n)

Category	Wave	Noting bias	Not perceiving bias	n
Vicarious victimization	2018	0.50	0.50	216
	2018 municipalities in 2023 survey	0.60	0.40	61
	2023 All	0.42	0.58	137
Verbal assault	2018	0.51	0.49	259
	2018 municipalities in 2023 survey	0.44	0.56	55
	2023 All	0.39	0.61	149
Refused medical help	2018	0.36	0.64	79
	2018 municipalities in 2023 survey	0.56	0.44	19
	2023 All	0.33	0.67	59
Assault	Assault 2018	0.36	0.64	56
	Assault 2023/2018	0.125	0.875	9
	Assault 2023 All	0.23	0.77	29
Property crime	2018	0.15	0.85	158
	2018 municipalities in 2023 survey	0.19	0.81	29
	2023 All	0.13	0.87	107

■ Proportion of victims noting bias motivation   ■ Proportion of victims not perceiving bias motivation

When comparing the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey, it is noticeable that there is no evident singular pattern of change concerning the rates of perceived bias motivation by crime category. The proportions of victims of potential vicarious victimization noting bias motivation, increased between the two surveys. The apparent changes for other crime categories cannot be confirmed when judged by standards of statistical probability.

The most common bias motivation perceived by hate crime and incident victims in the survey involved prejudice on grounds of ethnic, racial, or national origin. The majority of potential hate crimes and incidents involved such bias (Figure 10). Religious bias was the second most frequent bias motivation noted by victims. Less than a quarter of potential hate crime victims in the 2023 survey believed that political bias motivation was involved—a notably evident decline from the 2018 survey. A declining trend in incidents with a political bias motivation has also been noted by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights from their media monitoring of hate crimes and incidents.[21] In the opposite direction, the proportion of potential hate crime and incident victims who believed that disability bias motivation was involved increased between 2018 and 2023. Furthermore, given that a question about such bias was only asked of respondents who stated that they had a disability, the hate crime and incident victimization rate of disabled persons is far higher—as discussed below in the section on 'Victimization and victim characteristics.'

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21 Natasha Petkovska (2023) *Annual Report on Hate Crimes in 2022,* Skopje: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, page 86.

Figure 10: Bias motivations perceived by hate crime victims
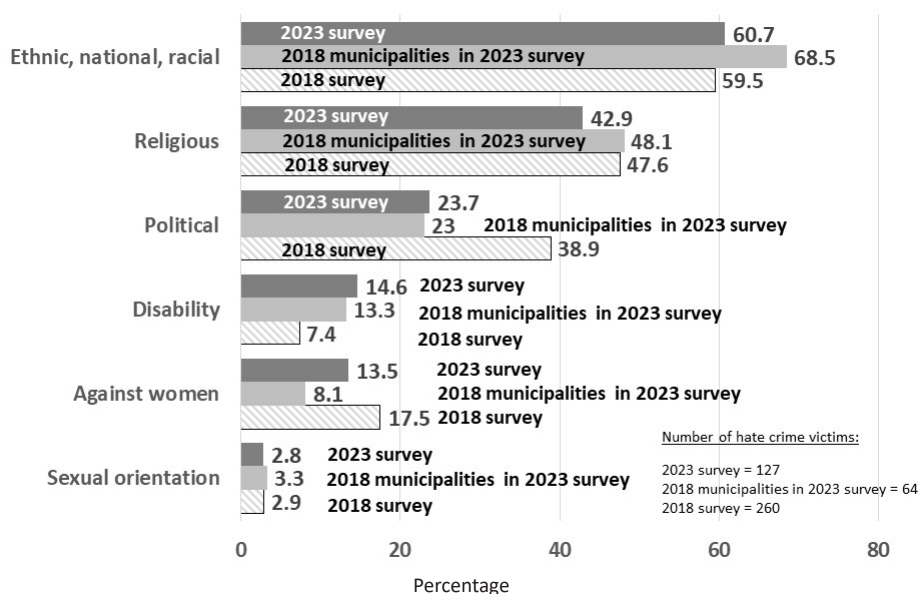
Only a small proportion of potential hate crime and incident victims in both waves of the survey believed that sexual orientation bias was involved. However, given that a question about such bias was only asked of the small number of respondents who identified themselves as other than 'heterosexual', the potential hate crime and incident victimization rate amongst lesbian gay, bisexual, and 'other' respondents is far higher—as discussed below in the section on 'Victimization and victim characteristics'.

Lastly, a question about perceived gender bias motivation was asked only of women victims of crime in a separate module of the questionnaire focussing on the most serious crime respondents believed they had experienced in the previous 12 months. The findings are therefore not strictly comparable with the relative proportions of other bias motivations just discussed. Nevertheless, it is instructive to note that in just over 1-in-8 potential hate crimes and incidents captured by the 2023 survey, women respondents believed that the crime happened 'because they are a woman'.

Some victims mentioned more than one bias motivation involved in the potential crimes and incidents they experienced. This can be determined by examining the most serious crimes experienced by respondents that they believed were bias motivated. The most common multiple, or so-called 'intersectional',[22] bias victimization involved religious background combined with ethnic, racial, or national background. Out of the 25 most serious crimes with a perceived religious bias motivation, in 23 cases ethnic, racial, or national bias was also perceived. However, the close interrelation between religious bias and ethnic, racial, or national bias for religiously motivated crimes and incidents is lessened for hate incidents and crimes with an ethnic, racial, or national bias. A number of victims (16) of the most serious potential crimes where such bias was noted did not mention religious bias.

BIAS INDICATORS

Bias indicators for offenses perceived to be bias-motivated provide observable signs of the perpetrator's potential motivation.[23] They are used as circumstantial evidence in the prosecution

22 OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (2020) *Understanding the Needs of Hate Crime Victims,* Warsaw: OSCE ODIHR, page 9.

23 OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (2014) *Prosecuting Hate Crimes. A Practical Guide,* Warsaw: OSCE ODIHR, page 46.

of hate crimes. The victim is the first source of such evidence. Accordingly, the North Macedonia hate crime survey asked all victims of potential crimes and incidents they perceived to be bias-motivated and why they thought so. Different crime types show different patterns of perceived bias motivation—determined in large part by whether the victim and offender came into contact. The number of victims in the survey is too few to provide a comparison between the crime types to acceptable standards of statistical probability. Nevertheless, it is instructive to examine indicative patterns—which are shown in Figure 11. Given that the focus is on the patterns, not numbers, a heat map is used.

Figure 11: Bias indicators of ethnic, racial or national potential hate crimes and incidents, 2023

	VERBAL ASSAULTS		VICARIOUS VICTIMIZATION		PROPERTY CRIME		REFUSAL OF MEDICAL HELP	PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ASSAULT*	
	Insults	Threats to safety	Grave desecration or damage	Prevention or disruption of public gathering	Property theft or robbery	Property damage	Refusal of medical help	Physical assault without injury	Physical assault with injury
What the offender said to me, or words used by the offender									
Gestures made by the offender									
The date on which it occurred									
The place at which it occurred									
It happened before									
The offender's ethnic, racial, or national origin									
Total (n)	[22]	[12]	[41]	[10]	[6]	[6]	[8]	[2]	[3]
All unweighted									
Values Proportions	0,75-1,00		0,50-0,74		0,25-0,49		0,01-0,24		0

*No sexual assaults or deprivation of liberty offenses with ethnic, racial, or national bias noted by respondents.

Even though the findings can only be treated indicatively, it is evident that in potential hate crimes and incidents where victims and perpetrators come into contact, such as in instances of verbal assault, the refusal of medical help, and physical assaults, the most common bias indicator is words used by offenders. Victims, witnesses, and even co-perpetrators, are all potential sources of such evidence.[24]

PERPETRATORS

When victims of potential hate crimes and incidents are asked about the perpetrators, it is evident that there is no single type of offender. Furthermore, it is recognised in the hate crime policy literature, and by practitioners working against hate crime, that many offenders are very ordinary

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24 ibid., page 60.

people with no affiliations with extremist groups.[25] This is evidenced by the findings from the North Macedonia hate crime survey as victims were asked about the perpetrators of the most serious crimes they experienced (Table 1).

Table 1. Perpetrators of hate crimes and incidents and other crimes and incidents

	Hate crime		Other crime	
	2018 г.	2023 г.	2018 г.	2023 г.
A stranger	25,2	27,4	22,8	13,9
I did not see the offender	22,2	6,0	28,5	28,9
Someone else from your neighbourhood	18,8	8,3	8,7	6,2
Member of your household	12,3	9,2	3,8	5,6
Someone else you know	11,3	12,2	10,4	9,9
Other public official	5,6	6,5	3,9	7,4
A neighbour	4,5	5,9	9,8	9,9
Teenager or group of teenagers	4,1	5,2	2,8	4,1
Someone from school or college	3,5	3,7	3,6	2,8
Football fan/hooligan	3,5	--	0,6	--
Someone you work with/colleague	3,2	7,6	2,3	3,1
A customer, client, or patient	2,7	8,0	2,8	1,9
Police officer	2,5	1,5	0,7	1,6
Member of an extremist group	0,4	6,8	--	0,9
Other	0,4	14,8	8,0	15,6
Total (unweighted)	90	60	207	160

Column percentages (total percentages exceed 100% as multiple selection possible)

For victims of potential hate crimes and incidents, the pattern of response is similar between the two waves of the survey. While some offenders were known to the victims in some ways, strangers were the most common single type of perpetrator. Members of extremist groups were rarely mentioned by victims as the perpetrators of hate crimes and incidents.

CONCLUSIONS: COMPARING HATE CRIME VICTIMIZATION RATES FOR 2018 AND 2023

The 2023 wave of the North Macedonia hate crime survey indicates a far higher prevalence of potential hate crime victimization than suggested by official and NGO data. The same was the case for 2018. Compared to the small decline in the overall rate of potential crime victimization in general as discussed in the previous section of this report, the findings presented in this section evidence no change in the overall rate of potential hate crime and incident victimization between 2018 and 2023. Consequently, as would be expected, although for some crime categories covered by the survey, there are apparent changes in the rates of perceived bias motivation, there is no evident singular pattern of change. The pattern of perceived different bias motivations for hate crimes and incidents is also similar between the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey. However, there is one notable difference from the 2018 survey. The proportion of hate crimes and incidents with a perceived political bias has declined. Prejudice on grounds of ethnic, racial, or national origin remains the most commonly perceived bias motivation.

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25 ibid, page 22.

5. VICTIMIZATION BY VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

OVERALL VICTIMIZATION RATES BY GENDER

Women respondents were slightly more likely than men respondents to report having been a victim of any potential crime in the 12 months before the survey (25.0% of women- 22.9% of men). The overall victimization rate rises (to 28.2%) for the 2023 women participants as a group from the 2018 survey municipalities, which is slightly lower than the rate (28.7%) for men participants as a group from the 2018 survey municipalities. In the 2018 survey, higher proportions—35.4% of men and 30.7% of women—reported having been the victim of any crime in the 12 months before the survey.

However, none of the differences between women and men in the overall rates of potential crime victimization, for both waves of the survey, can be confirmed when judged by standards of statistical probability. Likewise, the apparent small decline in the victimization rate for women since 2018 does not evidence a change when judged by standards of statistical probability. The decline in the overall victimization rate for men since 2018 can, however, be confirmed by standards of statistical probability.

In short, the 2023 survey indicates no difference in the overall crime victimization rates between women and men. However, it potentially shows a reduction in the overall crime victimization rate for men compared with the 2018 survey.

GENDER AND HATE CRIME VICTIMIZATION

There is no evident difference between women and men in the 2023 wave of the survey for the overall rate of potential hate crime and incident victimization. One in twelve women (8.5%) and men (8.6%) reported having been a victim of at least one potential hate crime or incident in the 12 months before the survey. Likewise, no evident difference between women and men in the overall rate of hate crime victimization was found in the 2018 survey. However, the overall hate crime victimization rates in 2018 (women 15.1%: men 15.2%) were almost twice as high as in 2023. However, the small differences in the rates by gender between the two surveys are removed for the 2023 survey participants from the 2018 municipalities (women 13.7%: men 15.9%) when judged by standards of statistical probability.

To sum up, there is no evident difference between women and men in the overall rate of potential hate crime and incident victimization in the 2023 wave of the survey. The same was the case in 2018. There is also no evident change in the potential hate crime and incident victimization rates for men and women between the two surveys.

AGE AND CRIME VICTIMIZATION

In the 2018 wave of the survey, younger respondents were more likely than older respondents to report having been a victim of a potential crime or incident in the previous 12 months—as can be seen when respondents are categorised into three age groups (Figure 12). This is the case for both men and women.

Figure 12: Crime victimization by age group
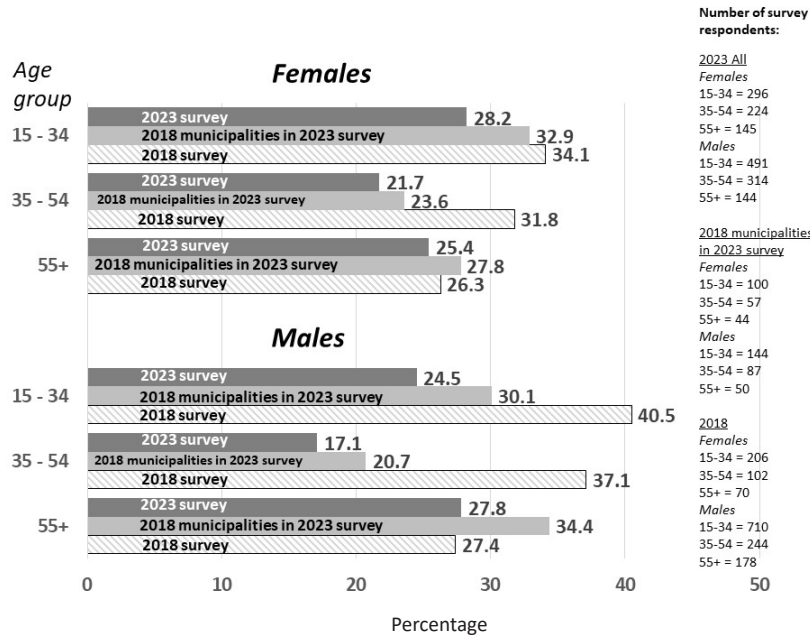
However, the association between increasing age and declining potential crime and incident victimization is not evident for all 2023 respondents as a group, or for the respondents within that group from the 2018 municipalities. This might be associated with a greater rate of potential crime and incident victimization among people with a disability in 2023 and a higher proportion of 55-year-olds and over having a longstanding illness or disability, as discussed below.

AGE AND HATE CRIME VICTIMIZATION

Hate crime victimization occurs across the full age range of respondents. However, in 2018, younger respondents were more likely than older respondents to report having been a victim of a potential hate crime or incident in the previous 12 months (Figure 13).

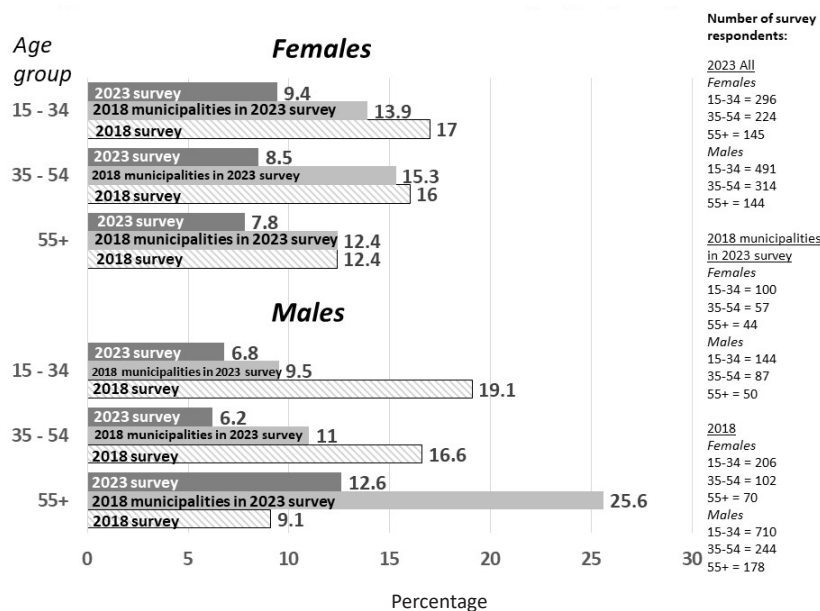*Figure 13: Hate crime victimization by age group*

However, the association between increasing age and declining potential hate crime and incident victimization is not evident for all 2023 respondents as a group or for the respondents within that group from the 2018 municipalities. As is the case for the experience of crime in general, this might be associated with a greater rate of potential hate crime and incident victimization among people with a disability in 2023, and a higher proportion of 55-year-olds and over having a longstanding illness or disability, as discussed below.

DISABILITY AND VICTIMIZATION RATES

Just over one in eight respondents (13.3%) in the 2023 wave of the survey said that they had a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more. This rises to almost one in five respondents (19.1%) from the 2018 municipalities in the 2023 wave. It is slightly more than the 18.0% of participants in 2018 with a disability. However, the difference does not evidence any change between the two surveys when judged by standards of statistical probability.

In both surveys, respondents with a long-lasting physical or mental health condition or illness were more likely to report having been a victim of a potential crime or incident in the previous 12 months compared with those without a disability:

◆ (45.4%: 20.7%) for all respondents in the 2023 wave of the survey.

◆ (53.2%: 22.6%) for respondents from the 2018 municipalities in the 2023 wave of the survey.

◆ (37.9%: 31.9%) for respondents from the 2018 wave of the survey.[26]

It is notable that a higher proportion of respondents with a disability from the 2018 municipalities in the 2023 wave of the survey were more likely to report having been a victim of a potential crime or incident in the previous 12 months compared with respondents with a disability in the 2018 wave of the survey—indicating a change between the two waves of the survey.

DISABILITY AND HATE CRIME VICTIMIZATION

Almost one quarter—24.2%—of all respondents in the 2023 survey who said that they had a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last for 12 months had experienced a potential hate crime or incident in the previous 12 months compared with 6% of respondents without a disability. In the case of respondents from the 2018 municipalities in the 2023 wave of the survey, the hate crime and incident victimization rate rises to 34.4% compared with 18.4% in 2018—and, as is the case with crime victimization in general for persons with a disability, indicates a change between the two waves of the survey.

ETHNICITY AND VICTIMIZATION

The numbers of respondents from ethnic and national minorities in the 2023 wave of the survey are too small to reliably make comparisons between all of the groups concerning their reported experience of potential hate crime and incidents, and crimes without a perceived bias motivation (Table 2). The same limitation affects the comparison between the 2018 and 2023 waves of the

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26 This evident difference is not confirmed when judged by standards of statistical probability.

survey. The only reliable comparison—when considering respondent numbers—is for Albanian and Macedonian respondents:

◆ In the 2023 wave, when compared with Albanian respondents, almost twice the proportion of Macedonian respondents from the 2018 municipalities had experienced at least one potential crime or incident in the previous 12 months (Albanian 17.9%: Macedonian 35.40%).

◆ For the other municipalities in 2023, there was very little difference in the victimization rates between Albanian and Macedonian respondents (Albanian 21.8%: Macedonian 20.2%).

◆ In the case of potential hate crime and incident victimization, the comparison of the 2018 survey with the 2023 respondents as a group from the 2018 municipalities, shows that victimization rates have remained static between the two waves of the survey (The small observable differences are not confirmed by standards of statistical probability).

◆ Making the same comparison between 2018 and 2023 for potential crime victimization in general, it is evident that there has been a decline in the victimization rate for Albanian respondents as a group since 2018, but the rate has remained static for Macedonian respondents as a group.

Table 2: Ethnicity and potential victimization

	2018 survey			2018 municipalities in 2023 survey			Other municipalities in the 2023 survey		
	Hate crime	All crime	n	Hate crime	All crime	n	Hate crime	All crime	n
Albanian	9,9	25,0	592	10,6	17,9	187	7,4	21,8	181
Bosniak	25,0	32,0	[29]	50,0	75,0	[5]	80,0	80,0	[9]
Macedonian	17,1	36,7	693	16,1	35,4	246	3,2	20,2	844
Roma	46,2	61,5	[37]	14,3	14,3	[10]	28,6	41,2	[33]
Serb	22,2	40,0	[44]	14,3	25,0	[12]	41,7	75,0	[14]
Turk	10,9	36,4	58	26,3	47,4	[15]	2,6	13,2	[32]
Vlach	16,7	50,0	[31]	0,0	0,0	[3]	0.0	0.0	[9]

RELIGION AND VICTIMIZATION

In 2018, Christian respondents were more likely than Muslim respondents to report having been a victim of any crime or incident in the previous 12 months (36% of Christians: 28.1% of Muslims). Likewise, Christian respondents were more likely than Muslim respondents to report having been a victim of a potential hate crime in the previous 12 months (16.8% of Christians: 12.7% of Muslims). In the case of potential hate crime and incident victimization, the comparison of the 2018 survey with the 2023 respondents as a group from the 2018 municipalities, shows that victimization rates for both Christian and Muslim respondents as groups have remained static between the two waves of the survey (16.1% of Christians: 12.4% of Muslims). However, for potential crime victimization in general, while the victimization rate has remained static for Christian respondents as a group, there has been a decline in the victimization rate for Muslim respondents as a group since 2018 (34.4% of Christians: 20.9% of Muslims).

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND VICTIMIZATION

The great majority of respondents in both waves of the survey said that they are heterosexual—when asked about their sexual orientation (Table 2). Substantial numbers of respondents said that they 'prefer not to say.' In the 2018 wave, 20 of the 28 respondents who said that they are either bisexual, homosexual, or asexual, noted that they were a victim of a potential crime or incident within the last year, and 17 said that they had been a victim of a potential hate crime or incident. These rates are far higher than the rates for heterosexual respondents. In the 2023 wave of the survey, only six respondents said that they were either bisexual or asexual, and none selected 'homosexual.' This very low number prevents comparison between the two waves of the survey.

Table 3: Survey respondents by sexual orientation 2018 & 2023

	2018 г. %	2018 г. n	2023 г. %	2023 г. n
Heterosexual	88,6	1340	92,9	1499
Bisexual	0,6	9	0,2	2
Homosexual	0,4	8	0,0	0
Asexual	1,7	11	0,2	4
Other	0,6	10	3,4	54
Prefer not to say	8,3	132	3,4	55

6. REPORTING TO THE POLICE

Most of the questions in the North Macedonia hate crime survey about policing crimes and incidents were asked in the module concerning the most serious crimes. This section of the report presents the results from those questions, with comparisons between the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey, where the number of respondents is sufficient for analysis.

REPORTING RATES

Only one-third—33.6%—of all the most serious crimes noted by victims in the 2023 wave of the survey were reported to the police, compared with 42.1% in 2018. However, this difference is removed completely for the 2023 respondents as a group from the 2018 municipalities, as 42% of the most serious crimes were reported to the police.

To focus on hate crimes and incidents, just fewer than four in ten (37%) of the most serious crimes perceived to be bias-motivated, experienced by the 2023 respondents as a group from the 2018 municipalities, were reported to the police. It is very close to the reporting rate of 39.8% for the most serious crimes perceived to be bias motivated in the 2018 wave of the survey and does not evidence a change when judged by standards of statistical probability.[27]

Higher proportions of victims of the most serious crimes that were **not** bias-motivated made a report to the police: 45.7% in 2023 and 43.3% in 2018. However, this small difference between the two waves of the survey is also eroded when judged by standards of statistical probability—as are the apparent differences within each of the two survey waves between victims of bias-motivated and otherwise motivated crimes and incidents.[28]

REPORTING RATES BY CRIME TYPE

Different crime types show different rates of reporting to the police. It is useful to understand this to consider how it might impact the reporting rates for hate crimes and incidents compared with crimes and incidents without bias motivation—given that the proportions perceived to be bias motivated vary between the different crime types.

Victims of each crime type in the main crime module of the survey were asked how many times they had experienced a crime in the previous 12 months, and how many were reported to the police. However, the potential to examine reporting rates for each of the crime types—comparing bias-motivated crimes and incidents with crimes and incidents without bias motivation—is limited by the number of victims in the survey. However, this can be overcome by combining the data from both waves of the survey and using the five major crime groupings for the comparison. The most reliable response for comparison between the crime groupings is the proportions of respondents who stated that the crime or incident was not reported to the police. The findings clearly show a wide variation in reporting rates between the different crime categories (Table 3). Crimes and incidents involving the refusal of medical help were the least likely to be reported to the police. Verbal assaults—either

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27 While caution of interpretation needs to be exercised here given the small total (n=31) for the most serious crimes perceived to be bias motivated experienced by the 2023 respondents as a group from the 2018 municipalities, it is instructive to also note that even if the totals were increased tenfold there would still not be a statistically significant difference.

28 Likewise, even if the totals were increased tenfold, there would still be no statistically significant difference.

insults or threats—were the next least likely to be reported. By contrast, only a minority of property crimes were not reported to the police.[29]

Table 4: Victims who did not report the crimes or incidents they experienced to the police—by bias motivation and crime category

Crime category	Hate crimes and incidents		Crimes and incidents without perceived bias motivation		All	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Verbal assault	65,8	175	77,8	233	72,3	408
Vicarious victimization	11,5	138	27,2	170	19,7	308
Refused medical help	91,1*	[49]	94,3*	89	93,2	138
Property crime	18,4*	[48]	28,1*	217	26,7	265
Assault	45,0*	[29]	51,0*	56	49,3	85

North Macedonia Hate Crime Survey 2018 & 2023 waves combined
Row percentages
* The apparent difference between hate crimes and incidents and crimes and incidents without a bias motivation is not statistically significant.

While analysis of the most serious crimes and incidents shows no difference in reporting rates between those with perceived bias motivation and those without—as discussed above, analysis of reporting rates for the separate crime groupings using responses from the main crime module of the survey appears to show a consistent pattern: crimes and incidents with a perceived bias motivation are less likely not to be reported (in other words, more likely to be reported) compared with those without bias motivation. However, the apparent differences can only be confirmed to standards of statistical probability for verbal assaults and vicarious victimization. Nevertheless, these findings appear to go against conventional wisdom that hate crimes "are among the most under-reported crimes".[30]

REASONS FOR NOT REPORTING CRIMES AND INCIDENTS TO THE POLICE

A question about why victims did not report crimes to the police was included in the survey module focusing on the most serious crimes experienced by respondents. However, the numbers of the 2023 survey victims who did not report to the police the most serious crime they experienced are far too few for reliable comparisons with the 2018 wave of the survey. It is instructive, however, to consider the reasons provided by all victims, in both waves of the survey combined, who did not report to the police the most serious crime they experienced—given the larger number of respondents (Table 4).

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29 The same appears to be the case for vicarious victimization. However, compared to the other crime categories, a much larger proportion, almost half, of vicarious crime victims stated that they did not know if it was reported or not—possibly indicating that they weren't sure if somebody else such as cemetery authorities reported it, given that the survey question, "How many of these events have been reported to the police?", did not ask specifically if the respondent reported it.

30 OSCE ODIHR (2020) *Hate Crime Victims in the Criminal Justice System. A Practical Guide, Warsaw: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, page 43.*

Table 5: Reasons why most serious crimes not reported to the police

	Hate crimes and incidents	Crimes and incidents without perceived bias motivation	All
	%	%	%
Dealt with the problem ourselves/ help from family and friends	19,3	22,4	21,5
Not confident the police would be able to do anything	37,6	18,6	24,5
Too trivial/ not worth reporting	17,3	19,0	18,4
It is a common event/ just something that happens	30,7	12,6	18,3
Police would not have bothered/ not been interested	12,6	6,3	8,2
Fear of intimidation from perpetrators if reported incident	13,1	9,3	10,5
Concerned about negative consequences if reported	12,7	13,4	13,2
Dislike/fear the police/ previous bad experience with police	1,9	9,9	7,4
Inconvenience/ too much bureaucracy or trouble/ no time	7,6	7,5	7,5
Reported to other authorities instead	3,0	1,9	2,3
Residence permit problems – so couldn't report	--	0,8	0,6
Tried to report but police were not interested	1,8	0,4	0,8
Not reported because of language difficulties	--	1,5	1,0
Total (unweighted n)	89	208	297

North Macedonia Hate Crime Survey 2018 & 2023 waves combined

Column percentages (totals exceed 100 as multiple selection possible)

A key difference stands out when comparing victims of bias-motivated crimes and incidents with victims of otherwise motivated crimes and incidents concerning the reasons for not reporting. The proportions of the most serious crimes and incidents perceived to be bias motivated for which victims stated they were 'not confident the police would be able to do anything' and it is 'a common event or just something that happens', are twice as high as the proportions of victims of the most serious crimes and incidents without bias motivation offering the same reasons. These findings do not necessarily imply criticism of the police—especially as only a very small proportion of victims of bias-motivated crimes and incidents offered 'dislike or fear of the police' or 'previous bad experience of the police' as a reason for not reporting. They may well reflect a judgement on the part of victims that even if investigated, the police would not be able to do anything for a variety of reasons.

7. POST-VICTIMIZATION IMPACT AND WORRY ABOUT CRIME

The 2018 wave of the hate crime survey explored different types of post-victimization impact identified in the research and policy literature to date—socio-emotional, psychological, psychosomatic, and behavioural impact—comparing victims of potential crimes and incidents believed to be bias motivated with victims of potential crimes and incidents without such perceived motivation. For each of the measures of post-victimization impact the findings showed that victims of hate crimes and incidents as a group were more likely to report higher levels of impact than victims of other crimes. However, many of the evident differences could not be confirmed when judged by standards of statistical probability due to the size of the samples of survey participants.

The 2023 wave of North Macedonia hate crime survey likewise measured the post-victimization impact of hate crime compared with the impact of crime without a perceived bias motivation. It is instructive to examine the findings of the two waves of the survey for some key measures of post-victimization impact where differences between victims of potential hate crimes and incidents and victims of other crimes and incidents can be confirmed to standards of statistical probability.

BEING AFFECTED BY CRIME VICTIMIZATION

Survey respondents were asked about the most serious crime they experienced, 'Overall, how much were you affected?'. Notably, there was the same pattern of response in each wave of the survey (Table 6). Hate crime victims were more likely than victims of other crimes to state that they were affected 'very much' by their experience of victimization—although for 2018 the difference cannot be evidenced to standards of statistical probability.

Table 6: Being affected by crime victimization

	Hate crime		Other crime	
	2018 г.	2023 г.	2018 г.	2023 г.
Overall, how much were you affected?				
Very much	27,7*	28,6	22,1	13,8
Quite a lot	38,7*	46,4	30,0	37,4
Just a little	33,6	25,0	47,9	48,9
Unweighted n	*90*	*60*	*207*	*160*

Column percentages
* The apparent difference between hate crimes and incidents and crimes and incidents without a bias motivation is not statistically significant.

SOCIO-EMOTIONAL IMPACT

In both waves of the survey, hate crime victims as a group were over twice as likely as victims of other crimes to report having significant problems with family members or friends because of their experience of crime (Table 7).

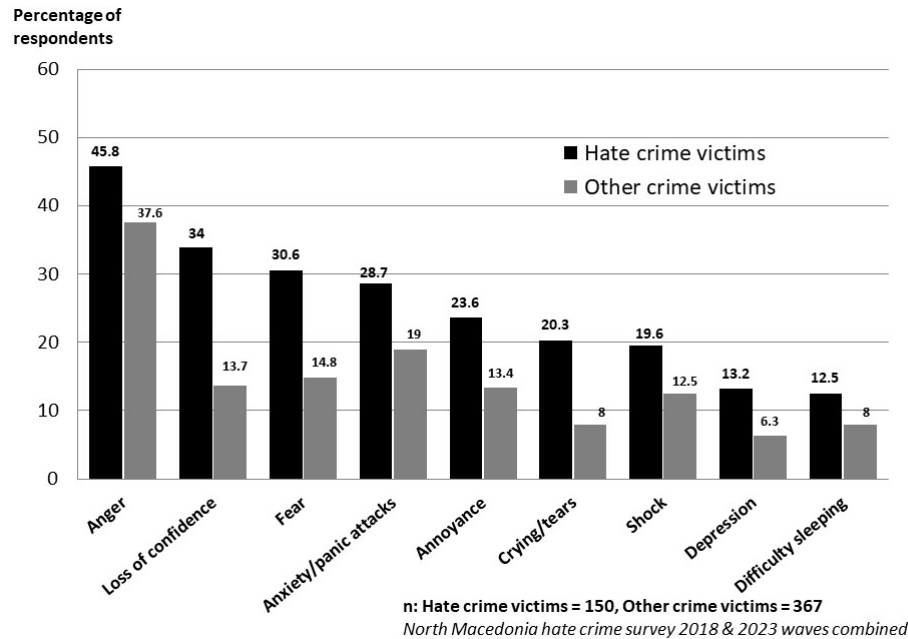Table 7: Socio-emotional problems following crime victimization

	Hate crime		Other crime	
	2018 г.	2023 г.	2018 г.	2023 г.
Did being a victim of this crime lead you to have significant problems with family members or friends, including getting into more arguments or fights than you did before, not feeling you could trust them as much?				
Yes	30,6	21,4	13,3	9,2
No	67,7	78,6	84,3	90,2
Do not know	1,7	0	2,4	0,4
Did being a victim of this crime lead you to have significant problems with your job or schoolwork, or trouble with your boss, co-workers, or peers?				
Yes	15,5	27,3	7,5	11,6
No	84,5	72,7	91,9	88,4
Do not know	0,0	0,0	0,5	0,0
Unweighted n	90	60	207	160

They were also over twice as likely to report having significant problems at school or work following their experience of crime.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

Both waves of the North Macedonia hate crime survey included measures of post-victimization psychological impact. The findings of the 2018 wave showed that victims of hate crimes and incidents as a group were more likely to report higher levels of psychological impact than victims of other crimes. Yet many of the evident differences could not be confirmed when judged by standards of statistical probability due to the size of the sample. However, when the 2018 and 2023 waves are combined (Figure 14), most of the evident differences between victims of potential hate crimes and incidents as a group and victims of other potential crimes and incidents can be confirmed to standards of statistical probability—apart from experiencing anger and difficulty sleeping.

Figure 14: Psychological impact of hate crime victimizaton

Percentage of respondents

n: Hate crime victims = 150, Other crime victims = 367
North Macedonia hate crime survey 2018 & 2023 waves combined

WORRY ABOUT POTENTIAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION

What has been examined much less in the international research and policy literature is the association between actual hate crime victimization and worry about potential victimization. Such an association was explored in the 2018 wave of the hate crime survey which offered unique insights into the relationship between crime victimization and worry about crime. It revealed a clear pattern of difference between the survey respondents who were victims of potential hate crimes and incidents and victims of other potential crimes and incidents. Notably, for a majority of the measures concerning worry about potential crime victimization, hate crime victims in the survey were more likely than victims of other to state they were fairly or very worried.[31]

Given that the matter of the association between actual hate crime victimization and worry about potential victimization remains relatively unexplored, this section of the report takes the insights further by comparing the findings of the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey. It additionally examines the worry about crime of persons who stated they were not victims of crime in both surveys to provide a possible indication of the feelings of insecurity and change over time (Table 8).

A number of patterns stand out from the findings presented in Table 8:

◆ For each of the indicators concerning worry about potential crime victimization, respondents who stated in the survey that they had experienced a crime or incident in the previous 12 months were more worried than those who had not experienced any crime.

◆ Respondents who had experienced hate crimes or incidents in the previous 12 months were more worried than those who experienced crimes and incidents that they perceived not to be bias motivated—with a few exceptions.
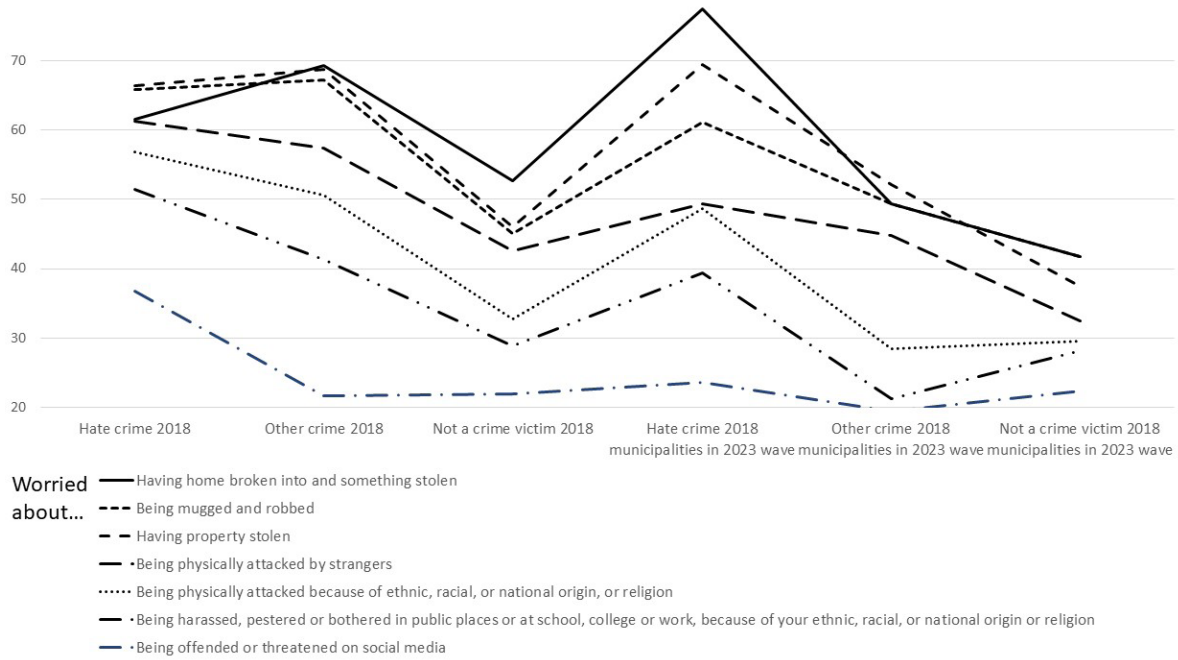
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31 The observed difference in worry about physical attack because ethnic, racial, national origin or religion, would not be statistically significant if the data were generated from a probability sample.

Table 8: Worry about potential crime victimization

	2018 survey			2018 municipalities in 2023 survey			Other municipalities in 2023 survey		
	Hate crime	Other crime	Not a victim of crime	Hate crime	Other crime	Not a victim of crime	Hate crime	Other crime	Not a victim of crime
How safe or unsafe do you feel walking alone after dark in the area where you live?									
A bit unsafe or very unsafe	43.5	35.3	25.1	39.4	31.3	18.1	47.7	26.8	17.2
How worried or not worried you are about having your home broken into and something stolen?									
Fairly or very worried	61.6	69.3	52.7	77.5	49.3	41.8	55.4	49.7	28.0
How worried or not worried are you about being mugged and robbed?									
Fairly or very worried	65.9	67.3	45.0	61.1	49.3	36.1	53.8	42.4	21.3
How worried or not worried are you about having your property stolen?									
Fairly or very worried	66.4	68.8	46.1	69.4	52.2	37.5	60.0	48.1	26.4
How worried or not worried are you about being physically attacked by strangers?									
Fairly or very worried	61.3	57.4	42.6	49.3	44.8	32.4	56.9	34.4	20.0
How worried or not worried are you about being subject to a physical attack because of your ethnic, racial, or national origin or religion?									
Fairly or very worried	56.8	50.6	32.7	48.6	28.8	29.6	47.7	24.0	11.7
How worried or not worried are you about being harassed, pestered or bothered in public places or at school, college or work, because of your ethnic, racial, or national origin or religion?									
Fairly or very worried	51.5	41.3	28.8	39.4	21.2	28.1	38.5	21.9	12.9
How worried or not worried are you about being sexually assaulted?									
Fairly or very worried	39.3	33.5	27.2	19.4	31.3	23.8	29.2	20.8	9.4
How worried or not worried are you about being offended or threatened on social media?									
Fairly or very worried	36.7	21.6	21.9	23.6	19.4	22.3	30.8	23.4	10.4
I never use social media	18.3	27.9	28.6	19.4	10.4	20.9	27.7	24.5	22.0
Unweighted n	*260*	*295*	*955*	*64*	*77*	*341*	*63*	*184*	*885*

◆ There is a downward trend in worry about crime between 2018 and 2023 (Figure 15). This is the case for each indicator of worry for respondents who had not been victims of crime and those who had been victims of crimes or incidents in the previous 12 months not perceived to be bias motivated. There is also a down trend between 2018 and 2023 for victims of hate crimes and incidents on most indicators—apart from worry about having their home broken into and something stolen, and having their property stolen in another way.

Figure 15: Worry about crime

Worried about…
— Having home broken into and something stolen
- - - Being mugged and robbed
– – Having property stolen
– · Being physically attacked by strangers
······ Being physically attacked because of ethnic, racial, or national origin, or religion
– · Being harassed, pestered or bothered in public places or at school, college or work, because of your ethnic, racial, or national origin or religion
— · Being offended or threatened on social media

8. CONCLUSIONS

The survey findings presented in this report very notably show that there is a close accord between the 2018 and 2023 waves of the North Macedonia hate crime survey. The 2023 wave indicates a far higher prevalence of hate crime victimization than suggested by official and NGO data. The same was the case for 2018. However, based on comparisons between the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey, the rates of potential hate crime and incident victimization have largely remained static.

Despite the static nature of the survey findings for potential hate crimes and incidents between 2018 and 2023, there are some indications of movement in the direction of a small decline in the overall victimization rates for crimes in general that would appear to fit the small downward trend in crime in the last few years as indicated by official statistics. But the differences are not yet substantial enough to signal a change between 2018 and 2023 for all the specific crimes asked about in the survey when judged by conventional standards of statistical probability.

Rates of reporting potential crimes and incidents to the police have also remained static between the 2018 and 2023. Crimes and incidents with a perceived bias motivation are less likely not to be reported to the police compared with potential crimes and incidents perceived not to be bias motivated.

It is notable, however, that the proportion of potential hate crimes and incidents with a perceived political bias has declined. It is also notable that there is a downward trend in worry about potential crime victimization since 2018.

Finally, from a methodological perspective, the close alignment of the results from the 2018 and 2023 waves of the survey indicates that the survey's design provides a reliable and cost-efficient approach to investigating the prevalence of potential hate crimes and incidents.