

Racism and Anti-Migrant Hostility in Canada

History, Data, and the Present Moment

Anti-migrant hostility in Canada is neither unprecedented nor accidental. For 140 years, the pattern has remained consistent: an economic shock hits; public anxiety turns on visible newcomers; organized groups amplify the grievance; and governments restrict the targeted group instead of fixing underlying structural failures.

The 5-Step Scapegoating Template

Canadian exclusionary policy cycles repeat across five structured phases:

01

Economic Shock

Recession, housing crisis, inflation, or demographic shift causes public strain.

02

Scapegoating

Visible newcomers become the cheapest explanation for systemic decay.

03

Amplification

Extremist networks and algorithms weaponize grievance for money and votes.

04

State Restriction

State legislates border caps and deportations instead of structural investment.

05

Belated Redress

State apologizes decades later while running new exclusionary files in the present.

The Structural Mechanism: The state constructs precarious temporary labor systems, benefits from the labor surplus, and then legislates restrictions against the targeted group when public backlash peaks.

Historical Ledger: 140 Years of Exclusion

Canadian exclusion has not been a steady background hum, but identifiable spikes tied to economic shocks:

Period	Trigger Context	Target Group	State Action & Concrete Policy Impact
1885–1923	CPR completion; BC white labor panic	Chinese migrants	Head tax escalating (\$50 to \$500; ~82,000 paid, generating \$23M); followed by total 1923 ban. Pier 21 ↗
1907	Recession & high unemployment in BC	Chinese, Japanese, South Asian	Asiatic Exclusion League riots; Ottawa implements Japanese quotas & "continuous passage" rule. CanEnc ↗
1914–1920	First World War national security fear	Ukrainians & "enemy aliens"	8,579 interned in 24 camps; 80,000 forced to register with police and used for forced labor. Archive ↗
1929–1935	Great Depression economic collapse	Unemployed immigrants	17,229 "public charge" deportations of immigrants whose only offense was receiving relief. Archive ↗
1942–1949	Second World War Pacific conflict	Japanese Canadians	21,000 forcibly removed, property liquidated and sold; disenfranchisement until 1949. Redress ↗
1964–1970	Halifax "urban renewal"	Africville Black community	400 residents evicted; historic church bulldozed at night; \$500 nominal compensation. CMHR ↗

Case Study: The 1907 Vancouver Riot

The single most instructive episode containing modern dynamics in compressed form:

1. Mobilization & Riot

- **AEL Formed:** Founded by Vancouver Trades and Labour Council during acute unemployment. [CanEnc ↗](#)
- **Institutional Complicity:** Vancouver's Mayor & Councillors were founding executives.
- **The Attack:** 10k marchers with "Keep Canada White" banners attacked Chinatown & Japantown.

2. Resistance & Strike

- **Powell St Defense:** Japantown residents armed with batons successfully defended their neighborhood.
- **3-Day General Strike:** Chinese Benevolent Association shut down sawmills and city restaurants. [Archive ↗](#)
- **Economic Leverage:** Proved the city was wholly reliant on Asian labor.

3. State Acquiescence

- **Impunity:** Only 1 to 5 rioters convicted with nominal 1–6 month sentences.
- **Rioters Won Policy:** Ottawa enacted Japanese quotas and continuous passage rule against South Asians. [CanEnc ↗](#)
- **Core Rule:** **State punished violence lightly, then enacted rioters' demands.**

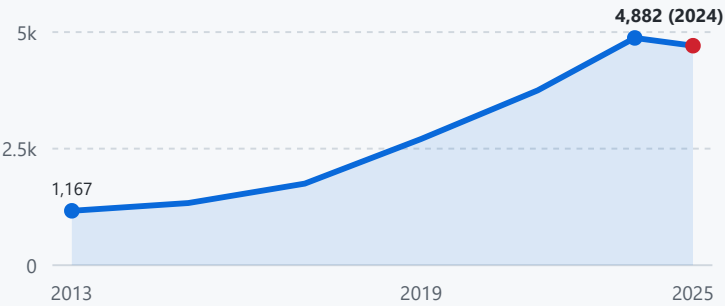
Empirical Present: Hate Crimes & Targets

Empirical data documenting the decade-long trend (2013–2025) and post-2020 acceleration across Canada:

Police-Reported Hate Crimes in Canada (2013–2025)

[StatCan ↗](#)

— Total Incidents ● 2025: 4,708

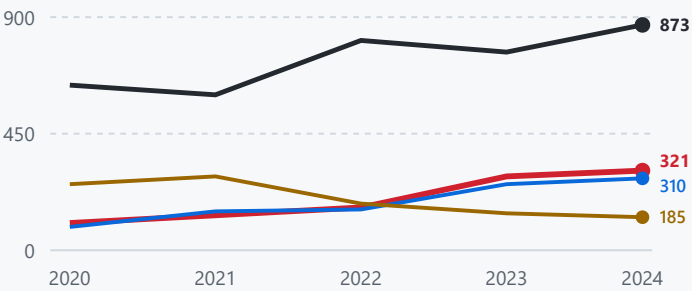


166% rise (2018–2024); rate of 11/100k remains nearly triple the 2016 baseline.

Hate Crimes Targeting Specific Communities (2020–2024)

[StatCan ↗](#)

— Black (873) — South Asian (+138%) — Arab/W. Asian (+146%)
— East/SE Asian (185)



Peel Region: South Asian hate incidents up 115% in 2025; only 24% resulted in charges.

Online Hate Pipeline & Organized Extremism

Transition from informal chat boards to legally incorporated political vehicles:

1. Algorithmic Surge

+1,350% [ISD ↗](#)

Rise in anti-South Asian slurs on X (2023–2024). Over 26,600 mentions of slurs cataloged in ISD research.

Transnational pipeline: 36% from India, 25% from US.

2. The Extremist Triad

- **Diagolon:** Media and propaganda arm.
- **Dominion Society:** Federally incorporated non-profit (\$25 dues, 3,000 members). [CAHN ↗](#)
- **Active Clubs:** Militant physical training arm.

Coordinated multi-tier apparatus

3. "Remigration" Platform

Explicitly advocates forced deportation of **5 to 9 million people**, denaturalizing Canadian-born children of non-citizens, and a 10-year total immigration ban. [CBC ↗](#)

Mainstream political infiltration goal

Mainstream Warning: Former Conservative Minister Jason Kenney called the leadership "racist," warning they are "not just opposed to mass immigration, but to ANY immigration."

Lived Experience: The "Citizenship Problem"

Survey statistics reveal that recorded hate crimes represent only a tiny fraction of lived reality:

51%

of racialized Canadians report experiencing discrimination (nearly double 27% non-racialized).

[StatCan ↗](#)

71%

of Canadian-born Black Canadians experience racism (higher than recent immigrants at 51%).

[StatCan ↗](#)

48%

of South Asian and 47% of Black workers face race-based workplace discrimination.

[StatCan ↗](#)

60%

of First Nations respondents report regular or ongoing discrimination in 2024.

[EnviroNics ↗](#)

The Core Analytical Finding

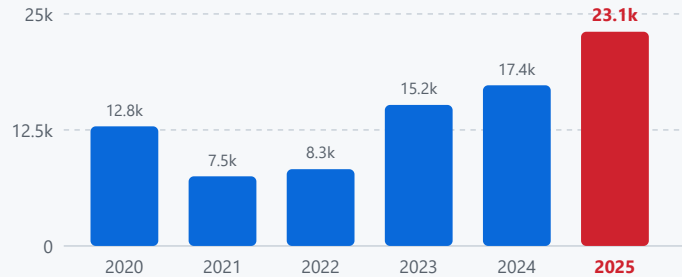
Canadian-born racialized citizens face *more* discrimination than newly arrived immigrants (57% vs 48%). Hostility is not a temporary byproduct of language barriers or cultural integration; **it is a structural citizenship hierarchy that treats racialized Canadians as perpetual guests.**

[StatCan SSPC ↗](#)

State Hardening & Record Deportations

The 2025–2026 legislative turn toward restriction and removal:

CBSA Removals / Deportations (2020–2025) [CBSA ↗](#)



Only 4.6% of removals involved criminality. Indian nationals lead (3,323 in H1 2026 alone).

Omnibus Bill C-12 & Asylum Restriction

- **Bill C-12 (Assented Mar 2026):** Bars claims filed >1 yr after entry or >14 days after border crossing. [Parl.ca ↗](#)
- **No Oral Hearing or Appeal:** Diverted to PRRA without automatic stays of removal.

Institutional Rollback & Economic Paradox

- **Envoys Dissolved (Feb 2026):** Standalone envoy mandates dissolved into central advisory.
- **Labour Paradox:** Restricts migration while Canada loses 25,500 workers monthly to retirement. [StatCan ↗](#)

200 Years of Protest & Rights Outcomes

Every expansion of Canadian human rights was forced by collective disruption across 4 trajectories:

1. Won Durable Legal Change

- **1872 Printers' Strike:** 10k rally forced Trade Unions Act. [CLC ↗](#)
- **1945 Ford Strike:** 99 days won the Rand Formula.
- **1967 Points System:** Decades of activism eliminated race criteria.

2. Defeated but Seeded Delayed Transformation

- **1919 Winnipeg Strike:** Crushed at the time; seeded modern labor laws.
- **1935 On-to-Ottawa Trek:** Police riot seeded unemployment insurance.
- **1946 Viola Desmond:** Lost appeal; catalyzed NS desegregation. [CMHR ↗](#)

3. Reversed State Rollback

- **1994 Farmworkers:** NDP union rights revoked by Conservatives in 1995. [CLC ↗](#)
- **2018 Wage Freeze:** Bill 47 cancelled \$15 wage 6 weeks before start.
- **2026 Target Cuts:** Post-grad permits cut retroactively.

4. Exclusionary Reactionary Protest

- **1907 AEL Parade:** Labor unions marched to ban Asian workers.
- **1914 Komagata Maru:** Mobilization to block 376 South Asian passengers (Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu). [Pier 21 ↗](#)
- **2025–2026 DomCon:** Conventions pushing mass remigration.

Asymmetry: Who Benefits vs. Who Bears Cost?

The distribution of anti-migrant hostility is structured and traceable:

Who Benefits?

Employers & Low-Wage Sectors:

Captures surplus of precarious labor. Tied closed work permits prevent workers from asserting labor rights under deportation threat.

[HUMA](#) ↗

Political Actors:

First captured credit for GDP growth via population expansion, and now capture the credit of restriction and enforcement optics.

Far-Right Monetization:

Monetize grievances directly through membership fees, donor networks, and algorithmic amplification.

Who Bears the Cost?

Migrant & Precarious Workers:

Double the rate of poor mental health (24% vs 13%). Suffer wage suppression and status loss. [StatCan](#) ↗

Canadian-Born Minorities:

71% of Canadian-born Black Canadians experience persistent discrimination and workplace exclusion.

Places of Worship:

Mandirs, Gurdwaras, Mosques, and Synagogues subjected to record vandalism, buffer-zone laws, and extortion.

What Is Genuinely Better in 2026?

The modern counter-infrastructure is significantly more advanced than in prior historical cycles:

1. Far-Right Terrorism Precedent

Justice Pomerance's 2024 ruling in the **Nathaniel Veltman** trial established that white supremacist violence is legally classified as *terrorism* in Canada, closing a historic double standard. [CanLII ↗](#)

2. Statistical & Survey Infrastructure

Annual StatCan hate crime tracking and lived-experience surveys (SSPC) eliminate official denialism and make systemic discrimination empirically measurable. [StatCan ↗](#)

3. Rapid Counter-Mobilization Speed

When the Dominion Society booked DomCon 2026 in Hamilton, labor and anti-racist coalitions forced the venue to cancel within **11 days**, organizing a 100+ person "Hope Not Hate" mobilization. [CBC ↗](#)

4. Constitutional Legal Resistance

The Supreme Court hearing on Quebec's **Bill 21** (March 2026) mobilized the largest roster of civil society interveners in Canadian history to challenge invocation of Section 33. [SCC ↗](#)

Action Items & Relatable Conclusion

Organized community resistance must move faster than the state can enact exclusionary demands:

1. Reframe Debate

Decouple housing and healthcare bottlenecks from immigration. Highlight 40 years of public housing disinvestment. [Environics ↗](#)

2. Status for All

Abolish closed employer-tied work permits. Provide permanent status upon arrival to remove exploitative labor leverage. [CLC ↗](#)

3. Local Mobilization

Follow the Hamilton 2026 playbook: deny venues, municipal legitimacy, and payment rails to white nationalist groups. [CAHN ↗](#)

4. Defend Rights Law

Demand restoration of anti-hate envoys, repeal regressive Bill C-12 asylum limits, and fight Section 33 Charter overrides. [Parl.ca ↗](#)

"Canada's human rights protections were never granted voluntarily by the state; they were forced through strikes, boycotts, and organized civil resistance. Meeting the present crisis requires the exact same discipline."

References & Research Documentation

Authoritative data sources, government reports, academic studies, and legal records cited:

Government Data & Official Statistics

- [Statistics Canada \(2024–2026\)](#): Police-reported hate crime in Canada (CSI & Daily Releases).
- [StatCan SSPC Survey Series](#): Lived discrimination among racialized & Canadian-born populations.
- [Canada Border Services Agency \(CBSA\)](#): Removals and deportations inventory statistics (2020–2026).
- [House of Commons HUMA & JUST Committees](#): Evidence on TFWP and online incitement (Reports 10 & 26).

Public Opinion & Independent Research

- [Environics Institute \(Focus Canada\)](#): Public opinion shifts on immigration & values (1977–2025).
- [Institute for Strategic Dialogue \(ISD\)](#): Datasets on anti-South Asian online hate surge on X (2024–2025).
- [Canadian Anti-Hate Network](#): Special investigative briefings on the Diagon & Dominion Society network.
- [CBC Investigative Reporting](#): Coverage of Dominion Society organizing & counter-mobilization in Hamilton.

Legal Precedents & Legislation

- [R. v. Veltman \(2024 ONSC 1528\)](#): Landmark ruling finding white nationalist violence to be terrorism.
- [R. v. Bissonnette \(2022 SCC 23\)](#): Supreme Court ruling on stacked parole ineligibility.
- [Bill C-12 / Strong Borders Act \(2026\)](#): Royal assent legislation amending the Immigration & Refugee Protection Act.
- [Supreme Court of Canada](#): Bill 21 constitutional hearing on Section 33 Charter override (March 2026).

Historical Archives & Labour History

- [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#): 1907 Vancouver Anti-Asian Riots and Asiatic Exclusion League.
- [Canadian Museum for Human Rights](#): Viola Desmond & resistance to Nova Scotia segregation.
- [Canadian Labour Congress](#): Historic strikes, PC 1003 (1944), and the Rand Formula (1946).
- [Government of Canada Historical Redress](#): Chinese Head Tax, Japanese Redress & Komagata Maru.