



# Understanding Hate Crime

— character, cradle and consequence

**A Seminar organised by the Rights Platform  
and the South Dublin Public Participation  
Network**

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019**

**Tallaght Library**

**10.30am to 12.30pm**

**Register your attendance at  
[info@stkevinsfrc.ie](mailto:info@stkevinsfrc.ie)**

## What is hate crime?

Hate crime is, typically, a violent crime motivated by prejudice, when a perpetrator targets a victim because of their perceived membership of a certain social group. Hate crime has two important elements:

A criminal element: Hate crimes are acts which are treated as crimes in criminal law, such as assaults, theft, criminal damage, arson or murder;

A bias motive: Hate crimes are motivated, at least in part, by hatred of someone's real or supposed identity or background.

## What is the impact of hate crime?

*The individual impact:* Hate crime dehumanises, it goes to the heart of person's identity, damages dignity and forces people to change their behaviour. Having specific protection in law for victims of hate crime recognises the seriousness and greater damage done by those crimes.

*The social impact:* Hate crimes can lead to fear spreading through the community, with people from the same and other minority groups feeling a shared vulnerability, sometimes leading to communities becoming isolated and torn apart. Ultimately, racist and religious hate crimes can lead to ethnic conflict.

## Is hate crime a recent occurrence?

No, but it has been afforded a wider acceptability through social media and a slackening of journalistic standards – the preservation of ‘free speech’ and maintenance of ‘balance’ in programmes and articles is often quoted as justification for facilitating irrational and unsubstantiated opinions. While the media may not condone hate crime it can create the conditions for its occurrence by providing space ‘where these things can be discussed’ or where ‘concerns need to be expressed’.

## Is it illegal?

Ireland is one of the few western European countries without hate crime legislation. In contrast, Northern Ireland law provides for an aggravation of sentence where hostility towards a victim’s race, religion, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation is established.

Attempts have been made to introduce a legal measure, the Criminal Law (Hate Crime) Bill in 2015 following the publication of *Out of the Shadows: Legislating for Hate Crime in Ireland*<sup>1</sup>. Unfortunately, the Bill failed to progress through the legislature.

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<sup>1</sup> Hate & Hostility Research Group and the Irish Council for Civil Liberties

# Programme & Speakers

- **10.30am: Opening - Aiden Lloyd – The Rights Platform**
- **10.35am: Seamus Taylor, Maynooth University**

**Defining hate crime, understanding its societal impact and explaining the legal context:** Seamus teaches social policy in Maynooth University. He is co-author of *Perspectives on Hate Crime: an Irish Perspective*. He previously worked for the UK Commission for Racial Equality and the Crown Prosecution Service and is presently undertaking doctoral research on hate crime.

- **10.55am: Shane O’Curry, *European Network against Racism Ireland***

**The incidence of hate crime and the pattern over time:** ENAR works collectively to highlight and address the issue of racism in Ireland through the promotion and monitoring of EU and global anti-racist initiatives.

- **11.10am: Allen Meagher, Editor of ‘*Changing Ireland*’**

**Online hate-crime and how communities can respond collectively:** How collective community action led to a landmark court case for hate crime.

- **11.25am: The impact of hate crime and hate speech**  
A personal experience

- **11.30am: Discussion Groups**  
What can be done locally and nationally?

- **12.00pm: Plenary - Concluding points**

- **12.15pm: Closing – Mary Dolan (South Dublin PPN)**