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Threats to the premises of religious communities

Results of the survey

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Threats to the premises of religious communities

Results of the survey

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Abstract

On 20 July 2020, the Ministry of the Interior set up a working group tasked with identifying security threats to the premises of religious communities and with drawing up proposals for improving their safety and security. One of the tasks of the working group was to map of the perceptions of religious communities of the current state of security and to identify possible threats.

This was done by carrying out an online survey targeted at representatives of all religious communities operating in Finland. No comprehensive information is available on religious communities in Finland, nor their contact details, which is why the survey was disseminated through the networks of the members of the working group. A total of 309 responses to the survey were received. The results of the survey were analysed by Jana Turk, doctoral student at the University of Helsinki. The working group acted as the steering group for the analysis of the results. The analysis is statistically representative for the Christian and Islamic communities, but not for the Jewish community, as the response rate of this community was low.

Keywords internal security, feeling of safety, threats, terrorism, religious communities, survey

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Yhteisötekijä	Uskonnollisten yhteisöjen tilojen turvallisuuden parantaminen -työryhmä		
Kieli	englanti	Sivumäärä	34
Tiivistelmä	<p>Sisäministeriö asetti 20.7.2020 työryhmän selvittämään uskonnollisten yhteisöjen tilojen kohdistuvia turvallisuusuhkia ja laatimaan esityksiä turvallisuuden parantamiseksi. Työryhmän yhtenä tehtävänä oli kartoittaa uskonnollisten yhteisöjen turvallisuuden nykytila ja uhkat.</p> <p>Kartoitus tehtiin toteuttamalla verkkokysely, joka kohdistettiin kaikkien Suomessa toimivien uskonnollisten yhteisöjen edustajille. Käytävissä ei ole kattavaa tietoa uskonnollisista yhteisöistä Suomessa eikä näiden yhteystietoja, ja tästä johtuen kyselyä levitettiin työryhmän jäsenten verkostojen kautta. Vastauksia kyselyyn tuli 309 kappaletta. Kyselyn tulokset on analysoinut Helsingin yliopiston tohtorikoulutettava Jana Turk. Työryhmä on toiminut tulosten analyysin ohjausryhmänä. Analyysi on tilastollisesti kattava kristillisten ja islamilaisten yhteisöjen osalta mutta ei juutalaisen yhteisön osalta, sillä nämä vastasivat heikosti kyselyyn.</p>		
Asiasanat	sisäinen turvallisuus, uhat, terrorismi, uskonnolliset yhteisöt, kyselytutkimus, turvallisuuden tunne		
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Hot som riktas mot religiösa samfunds lokaler

Resultaten av enkäten

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Författare	Jana Turk, Helsingfors universitet		
Redigerare	Tarja Mankkinen Inrikesministeriet		
Utarbetad av	Arbetsgruppen för att förbättra säkerheten i religiösa samfunds lokaler		
Språk	engelska	Sidantal	34

Referat

Inrikesministeriet tillsatte den 20 juli 2020 en arbetsgrupp med uppgiften att utreda säkerhetshot som riktas mot religiösa samfunds lokaler och att utarbeta förslag för att förbättra säkerheten. En av arbetsgruppens uppgifter var att kartlägga nuläget för och hoten mot religiösa samfunds säkerhet.

Kartläggningen genomfördes genom en webbenkät som riktades till företrädare för alla religiösa samfund i Finland. Det finns ingen heltäckande information om religiösa samfund i Finland eller om deras kontaktuppgifter, och därför spreds enkäten via nätverken för medlemmarna i arbetsgruppen. Enkäten besvarades av 309 personer. Resultaten av enkäten har analyserats av Jana Turk, doktorand vid Helsingfors universitet. Arbetsgruppen har verkat som styrgrupp för analysen av resultaten. Analysen är statistiskt omfattande för de kristna och islamiska samfunden, men inte för det judiska samfundet eftersom svarsprocenten för det judiska samfundet var låg.e, dapibus et aliquam et magna. Nulla vitae elit. Mauris consetetuer odio vitae augue.

Nyckelord inre säkerhet, känsla av trygghet, hot, terrorism, religiösa samfund, enkät

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BACKGROUND

On 20 July 2020, the Ministry of the Interior set up a working group tasked with identifying security threats to the premises of religious communities and with drawing up proposals for improving their safety and security. One of the tasks of the working group was to map the perception of religious communities of the current state of security and to identify possible threats. This task was accomplished by means of an online survey. While there is no comprehensive list available of the religious communities active in Finland, every effort was made to ensure that the reach of the survey was as wide as possible. A total of 309 responses to the survey were received. This report, prepared by Jana Turk, doctoral student at the University of Helsinki, presents an analysis of the responses. The working group has served as the analysis steering group.

Issues relating to the safety and security of religious premises have become topical¹ in recent years because of the terror attacks on such premises: for example the radical Islamist attack on a Copenhagen synagogue in 2015, the attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2019 and the attack on a synagogue in Halle, Germany in the same year.

Outside of Europe, religious premises have been the target of numerous attacks. In its 2020 annual report, the Finnish Security Intelligence Service discusses the widespread violence against Jewish and Muslim groups as well as the violence on symbolic targets such as synagogues and mosques.

In addition physical threats, members of religious communities are also subjected to hate speech, which undermines their feeling of safety. The rising trend of antisemitism and Islamophobia has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Finland, the Evangelical Lutheran Church and its representatives reportedly became targets for hate speech on a wide front in 2015, when a large number of asylum seekers arrived in Finland. Mosques have been vandalised, for example had their walls defaced or windows broken. Threats against the synagogues in Helsinki and Turku have increased in number and grown more commonplace. Religious communities do not always report hate

1 E.g. The United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites.

incidents against them to the police, and the crime statistics of the police therefore do not paint a full picture of the security situation of these premises. The survey conducted by the working group concerning threats to the premises of religious communities sought to obtain information on threats from those using these premises as well as their views on the safety and security of the premises.

The threat survey was carried out by the working group consisting of the following members:

Tarja Mankkinen, Head of Development, Ministry of the Interior, Chair

- Atik Ali, Master of Laws (Trained on the Bench), Finnish Muslim Network
- Habiba Ali, Project Coordinator, Finn Church Aid
- Abbas Bahmanpour, Imam, Resalat Islamic Society
- Afrah Al Bayaty, Media and Communications Officer, Turku Islamic Society
- Anas Hajjar, Imam, Finnish Islamic Society
- Mustafa Kara, Imam, Tampere Islamic Society
- Mika Kataja, Security Manager, Finn Church Aid
- Hanna Kiiskinen, Senior Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Education and Culture
- Ilpo Leino, Senior Advisor, Finnish National Rescue Association
- Marcus Miramo, Head of Security, Jewish Community of Helsinki, (also representing the Jewish Community of Turku)
- Petri Määttä, Executive Director of Department for Parish Services, Church Council
- Ari Korhonen, Specialist, Association of Finnish Municipalities
- Jari Pajunen, Chief Superintendent, Ministry of the Interior

The working group would like to thank the University of Helsinki and in particular Elina Vuola, Professor of Global Christianity and Dialogue of Religions, for their support and cooperation in mapping the threats and the related analysis.

1 Introduction

1.1 Data collection

The data was collected by means of a questionnaire on Webropol between 2 November 2020 and 7 December 2020.

The working group members who drafted the survey shared the link to the questionnaire in their respective networks, and encouraged recipients to respond to the survey. The questionnaire was made available in six languages: Finnish, Swedish, English, Arabic, Somali and Farsi.

Some of the questions were multiple choice, others open-ended follow-up questions. None of the fields was required, and several multiple-choice questions allowed the respondent to choose more than one option.

1.2 Dataset

A total of 309 responses to the questionnaire were received. Although some respondents did not answer all multiple-choice questions, and many did not answer to the open-ended questions, the majority of respondents nonetheless answered at least some of the open-ended questions. Difficulties in analysis arose from the fact that extra responses were given to many of the follow-up questions. It was merely impossible to assess whether the respondent had misunderstood the preceding question or whether the logic of the questionnaire was unclear to the respondent.

However, all responses were deemed significant and consequently, this report explains where and why responses were excluded from the analysis, even if this may impact on the statistical validity of the report.

While most responses were in Finnish, responses were received in all languages in which the questionnaire was available. Quotes from responses in languages other than Finnish have been translated into Finnish (and English for this translation of the report).

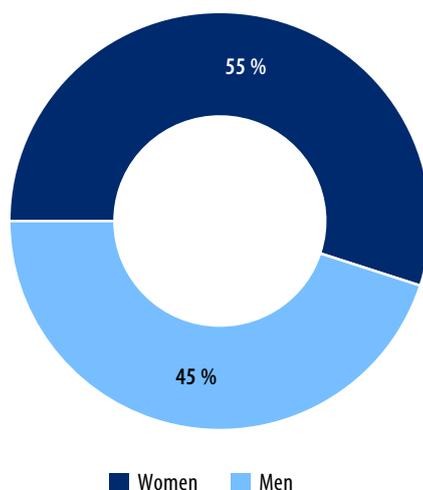
This report first lays out some demographic details on the respondents and then examines their feeling of safety in the vicinity of religious premises, their feeling of safety more broadly, experiencing and witnessing violence and threat of violence, violence against

women, the threat of violence from other users of the premises, violence occurring on the religious premises as a whole, suggestions for improving safety and security, and the ways in which the police or other authorities are contacted as well as instructions on safety and security.

1.3 Respondents

The first question on the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate their gender. Around 45% of the respondents were men and 55% women. Four respondents left this question blank (see Diagram 1). The question did not offer other gender identifications such as non-binary, neither did it include any opportunity to express that the respondent would prefer not to answer the question.

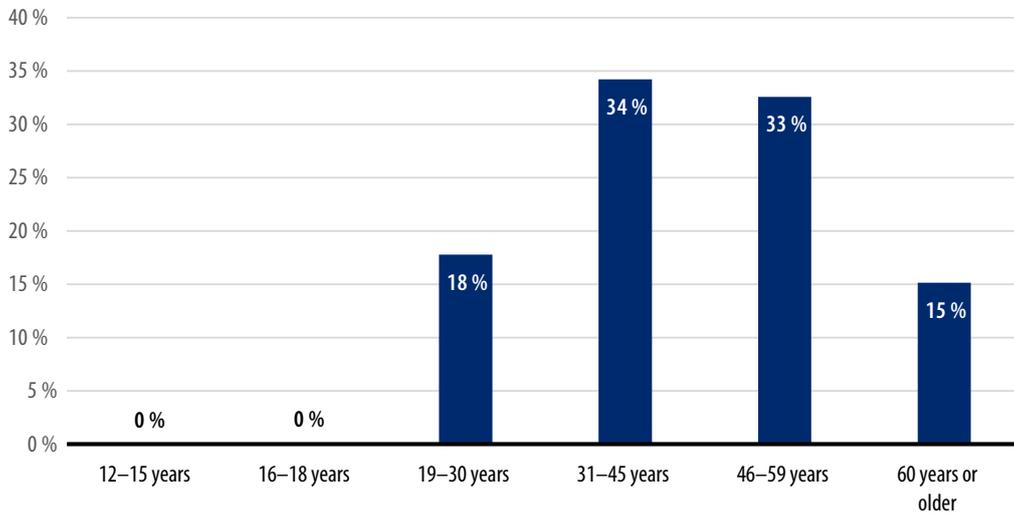
Diagram 1. Respondents' gender



The respondents were then asked to indicate their age by choosing one of the following: a) 12–15 years, b) 16–18 years, c) 19–30 years, d) 31–45 years, e) 46–59 years, f) 60 years or older.

The majority of the respondents fell in the age groups of 31–45 years and 46–59 years: 33% were aged 31–45 years and 32% were aged 46–59 years. Hence, two thirds of the respondents were middle-aged (31–59 years) and young adults (aged 19–30 years) made up the second largest group whereas those over 60 constituted the third largest age group. Only one of the respondents was aged 12–15 years. No responses were received from the age group 16–18 years. (See Diagram 2)

Diagram 2. Respondents' age



Most of the respondents practiced their religion in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area (41%) and with most respondents stating that they practiced their religion in Helsinki, or in another major Finnish city such as Tampere (10%), Turku (10%) or Oulu (45 respondents). One third practiced their religion in smaller municipalities.

Diagram 3. Towns

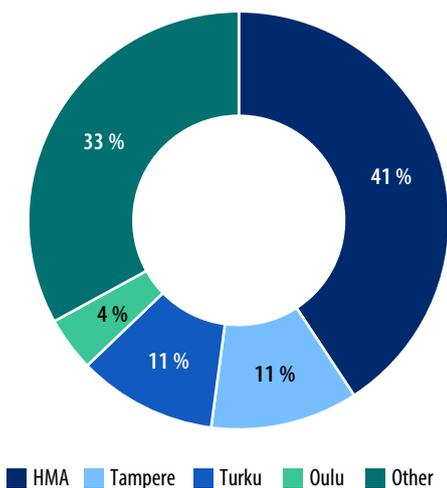
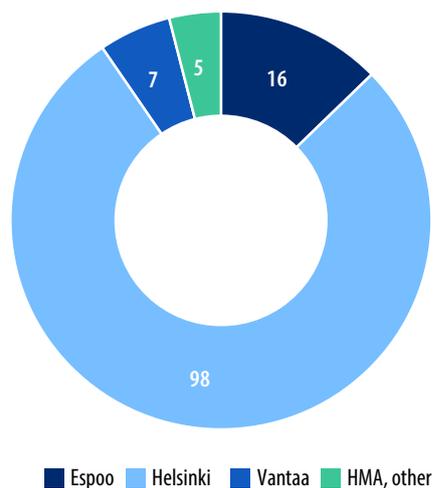
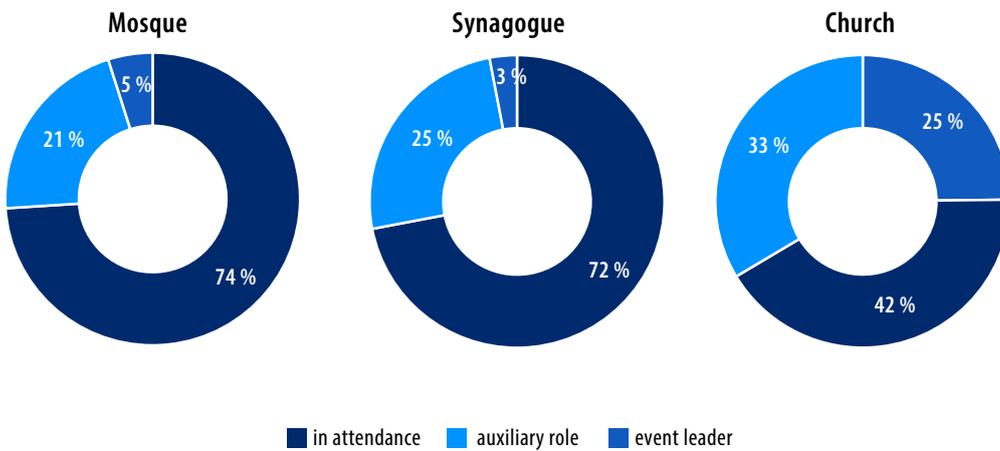
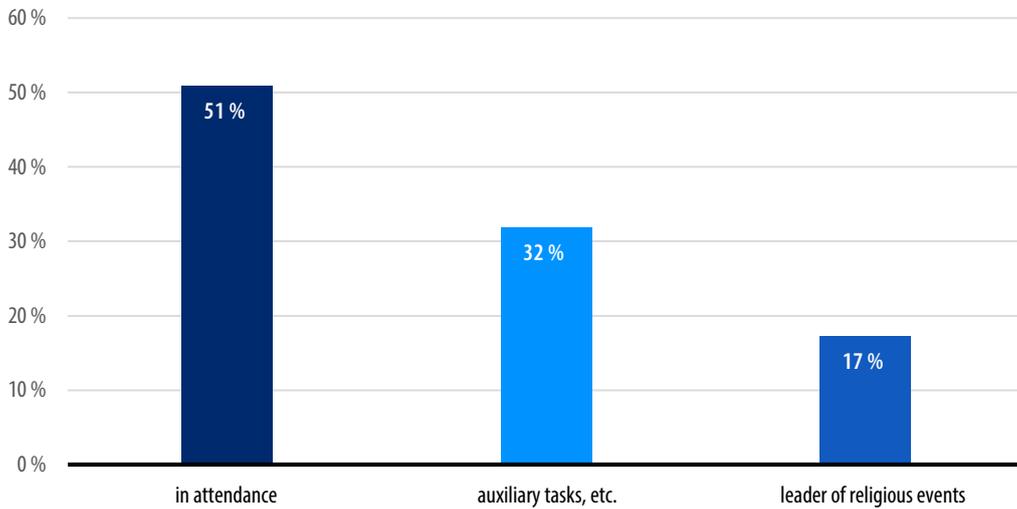


Diagram 4. Helsinki Metropolitan Area



Most of the respondents attend a church (138 respondents or 45%), the second largest group a mosque/prayer room (123 respondents or 40%) and 40 respondents or 13% a synagogue. Four respondents, or 1%, reported that they practiced their religion elsewhere, i.a. at a Baha'i centre or Buddhist meditation centre, or then prayed at home or frequented the premises of another community.

Diagram 5. Roles of respondents at religious events



The responses to Question 2 functioned as a base for a proxy variable for grouping the respondents by religious affiliation. Hereon forth in this report, those worshipping at a mosque/prayer room are referred to as Muslim, those who practice their faith at a synagogue are referred to as Jewish, and those stating that they use a church/prayer room/equivalent (e.g. parish premises, chapel) are considered Christian.

Due to the comparatively lower number of responses from the Jewish communities, the comparisons between religions are not valid in terms of statistics, however, they are significant from the perspective of the mandate of the working group conducting the survey.

The survey respondents can also be grouped along the lines of their role in the community: those who attend religious events², those who often take part in some auxiliary task or help with arrangements, and those who lead the events, such as priests, imams, rabbis and other religious leaders. Around half of all respondents (51%) answered that they just attended events, around one third (32%) took part in an auxiliary task or otherwise helped with arrangements, and 17% functioning as leaders of religious events.

Diagram 5 shows the considerable differences in respondent roles in the different religions: around three quarters of all Muslim and Jewish respondents stated that they were attending events. Among Christians, 42% stated that they were attending events. An auxiliary or supportive role at their places of worship was taken on by 21% of Muslim respondents, 25% of Jewish respondents and 33% of Christian respondents. Only 5% of Muslim respondents and 3% of Jewish respondents answered that they held the role of a leader (rabbi, imam), while 25% of Christian respondents had a leading function at religious events.³

2 This also means that the percentages given for the Jewish community are not statistically valid and cannot be generalised.

3 These impacts on statistical validity, should be kept in mind when reading the report and the comparisons given in it, thus, cannot be generalised.

2 Feeling of safety

Based on the responses, in general terms, it can be stated that around three quarters (74%) felt the religious premises to be safe. However, the differences between the religions is noteworthy: nearly 93% of Christian respondents felt safe in the vicinity of their church and religious premises, whereas only 69% of Muslim respondents and 32.5% of Jewish respondents felt safe in the vicinity of their religious premises.

There were no significant differences between genders or age groups in the responses to the question related to feeling safe.

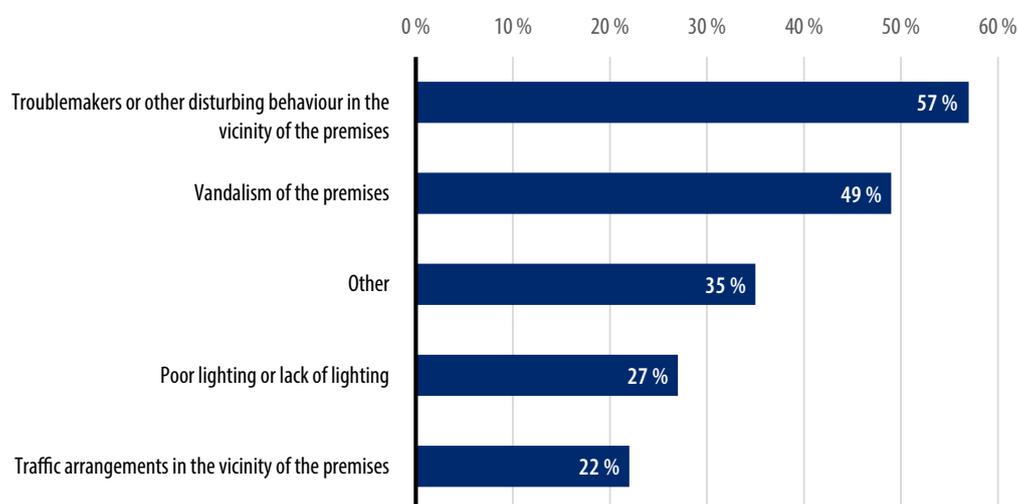
One quarter of all respondents did not feel safe in the vicinity of their religious premises.⁴ Seven percent of Christian respondents, 31% of Muslim respondents and 72.5% of Jewish respondents reported to feel unsafe in the vicinity of their religious premises

The reasons for not feeling safe were examined by means of a multiple-choice question with the following choices:

- a. Troublemakers or other disturbing behaviour in the vicinity of the premises
- b. Traffic arrangements in the vicinity of the premises
- c. Poor lighting or lack of lighting (outside the premises)
- d. Vandalism of the premises (e.g. defacement of walls or other property damage), and
- e. Other, please specify

The responses received are illustrated in Diagram 6.

⁴ Here, 3 respondents said that they felt safe in the vicinity of religious premises. However, they also answered the follow-up question concerning reasons for why they are not feeling safe. Their answers have been excluded from the analysis. Two of these respondents were Muslims who said that troublemakers made them feel unsafe. One of the two also stated poor lighting and traffic arrangements also to be factors. The answers of one Jewish respondent saying that both troublemakers and vandalism contributed to not feeling safe have been excluded here.

Diagram 6. Not feeling safe in the vicinity of religious premises

Troublemakers or other disturbing behaviour in the vicinity of the premises was reported as a factor that undermined their feeling of safety by 66% of Muslim respondents (25 of 38). The equivalent figure was 44% (12 of 27) for Jewish respondents and 50% (5 of 10) for Christian respondents.

Vandalism of the premises, for example defacement of walls or other property damage, was a contributing factor for feeling unsafe for 44.7% of Jewish respondents (17) and around 47% of Muslim respondents (18) who felt unsafe. Around one third of Christian respondents said they felt unsafe due to incidents of vandalism of the premises.

Poor lighting or lack of lighting outside the premises as well as traffic arrangements in the vicinity of the premises had a negative impact on feeling of safety for Muslim respondents in particular. Poor lighting or lack of lighting outside the premises was reported as a factor that increased their feeling of being unsafe by 14 Muslim respondents (36.8%) out of those who stated they felt unsafe. Traffic arrangements in the vicinity of the premises was a factor that increased the feeling of not being safe for 12 respondents (31.5% of those who feel unsafe).

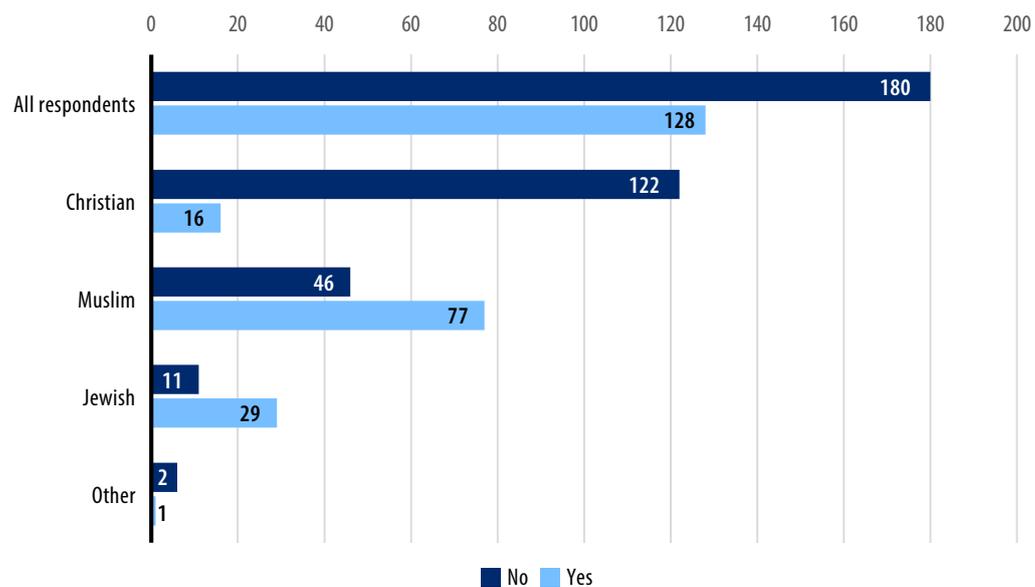
A total of 28 persons said that there was a reason other than mentioned in the questionnaire for their feelings of unsafety. Reasons specified under "Other" included terrorism, which was particularly prevalent in the responses of the respondents from the Jewish community. Another reason specified by the respondents was people under the influence of alcohol or drugs close by the premises. A few responses also brought forward prejudices against Muslims and related fears, referring to radical Islam, and Muslims who threatened church-goers.

Two respondents mentioned “possible racist attacks” and “hate speech online” as reasons that increased their feeling of not being safe.

The questionnaire included separate questions on hate speech and its effects on the respondent’s feeling of safety and security. According to the responses, 42% of respondents felt that hate speech against their community and religion that is spread online and in social media affected their feeling of safety.

Hate speech had the greatest effect on the feeling of safety of Jewish and Muslim respondents. Around three quarters⁵ of Jewish respondents and 63% of Muslim respondents reported that hate speech affected their feeling of safety when they practiced their religion. Among Christian respondents, the equivalent figure was 11.6%. (see also Diagram 7).

Diagram 7. Effect of hate speech on feeling of safety

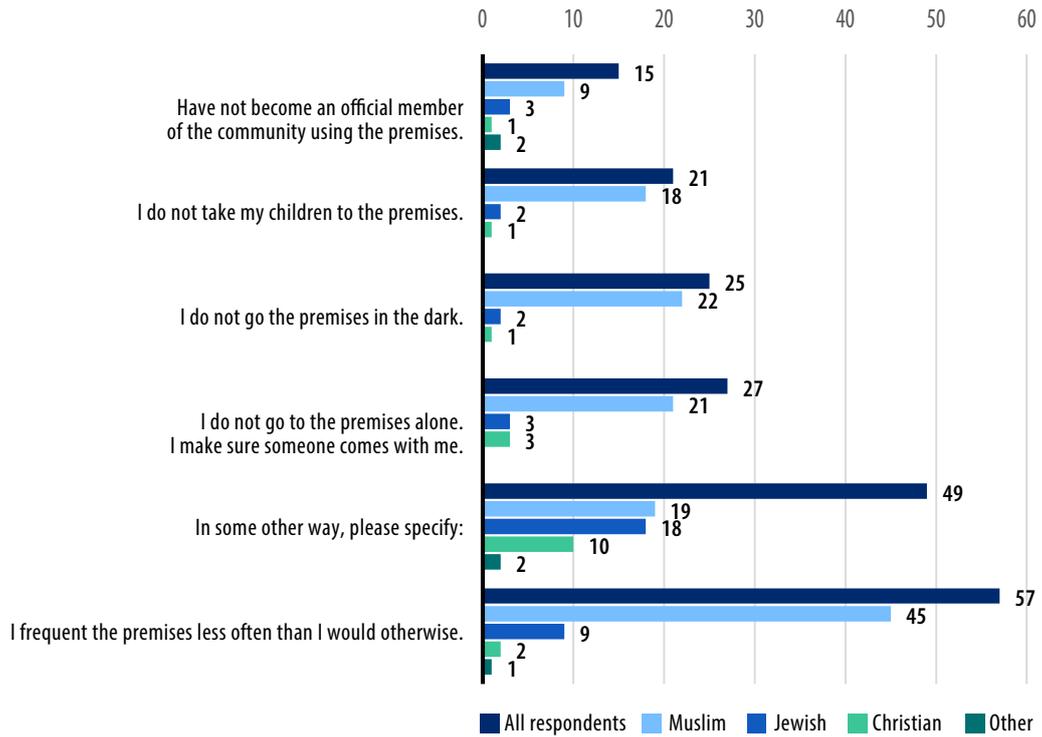


Hate speech spread in social media affected the respondents’ religious activities. The premises were frequented less often than before by 45% of all respondents. As in the previous question, Muslim and Jewish respondents were affected at a significantly higher rate here. Muslim respondents in particular stated that they changed their religious activities due to hate speech. Such changes in behaviour included i.a.: not taking their children along to the premises, not visiting the premises after dark, or attending the

⁵ 29 of the 40 Jewish respondents, i.e. almost three quarters.

premises alone. A few respondents said that they had not become official members of the community because of online hate speech. The respondents also stated that they were more reserved and anxious.

Diagram 8. Effects of hate speech on own behaviour



Although the responses do not prove a direct correlation, it can be assumed that the feelings and actions described stem from hate speech, the violence and threat of violence experienced by the respondents.

3 Experiencing and witnessing violence and threat of violence

Out of all respondents, 20% have experienced violence, or threats of violence in proximity of or inside the religious premises they frequented.

Violence or threats of violence in the vicinity of religious premises had been experienced by 40% of Jewish respondents (16/40), 18% of Muslim respondents and 16% of Christian respondents.

The most common form of violence was verbal violence, which had been experienced by most of the respondents. Based on the responses, 48 of the 61⁶ respondents who had experienced violence had been a victim of verbal violence. Out of the 48, 19 were Muslim, 13 Jewish, 15 Christian, and 1 was of another faith. The second most common form of violence was threats of physical violence, which had been experienced by 26 respondents that had experienced violence. Of them, 7 were Muslim, 9 Jewish and 10 Christian. Physical violence had been experienced by 8 of the 61 respondents who had experienced violence. Three of them were Muslim, two Jewish and three Christian.

Experiences of other violence, such as vandalism, mental violence, being spat on and someone sticking chewing gum on their clothes, were reported by 19 respondents.

Many respondents (23%) had also witnessed another person experience violence or threats of violence. Of these respondents, 37.5% were Jewish (15/40) and around 29% Muslim (35/120). Based on the results of the questionnaire, significantly more Muslim and Jewish respondents had witnessed violence than Christian respondents (19/138 or around 14%).

⁶ Two respondents stated that they had not experienced violence, yet they answered these follow-up questions and their answers were therefore excluded from analysis above. Both respondents were Muslim. Both stated that they had experienced verbal violence, one reported having experienced the threat of physical violence and one having experienced physical violence.

The most common form of violence witnessed by the respondents was verbal violence. Verbal violence against another person had been witnessed by 59 of the 71⁷ respondents witnessing violence: 31 of them were Muslim, 11 Jewish, 15 Christian and two of another faith.

The second most common form of violence is the threat of physical violence, which had been witnessed by 35 of the respondents witnessing violence: 15 of them were Muslim, 10 Jewish and 10 Christian.

Of the 71 respondents who had witnessed violence, 14 had also witnessed physical violence against another person. Three Muslim respondents, four Jewish respondents, six Christian respondents and one respondent of another faith had witnessed physical violence against another person. Eleven respondents had also witnessed other types of violence, such as egg-throwing, emotional and spiritual violence inflicted by conservatives, pressure and vandalism. A few of the respondents emphasised the severity of verbal violence and its threat by describing these as follows:

“On social media, radicalised Muslims have posted death threats and dreamed of shooting/killing Shia Muslims. The threats were made against included the names of specific individuals”

“A family member received threatening calls from an anonymous number”

“death threats”

3.1 Violence against women

The questionnaire included a separate question on violence against women/gendered violence. However, the majority of respondents (79%) did not feel that women experience violence due to their gender. In the replies, there were considerable differences between the religions. Additionally, differences between genders were could also be observed.

⁷ Two respondents stated that they had not witnessed violence being targeted at another person, yet they answered these follow-up questions and their answers were therefore excluded from the analysis above.. Both respondents stated that they had witnessed verbal violence targeted at another person, one reported having witnessed the threat of physical violence and one having witnessed physical violence. Both of these respondents were Muslim.

Thirty percent of Muslim respondents felt that women experience gendered violence. The equivalent figures for Jewish and Christian respondents were 10% (4/40) and 14.5%, respectively.

Among female respondents, 27% felt that they experienced gendered violence, whereas only 13% of male respondents felt this way.

Of all respondents, 21% (64) felt that women experience gendered violence. These 64 respondents consist of 28 Muslim women and 10 Muslim men, three Jewish women and one Jewish man, and 13 Christian women and six Christian men. One woman and one man of another faith also stated that women (in their communities) face gendered violence.

Diagrams 9 and 10 illustrate the responses to this question by religion and gender.

Diagram 9. Have you experienced that women face other threats that are directed solely at women, in addition to violence and threat of violence described above?

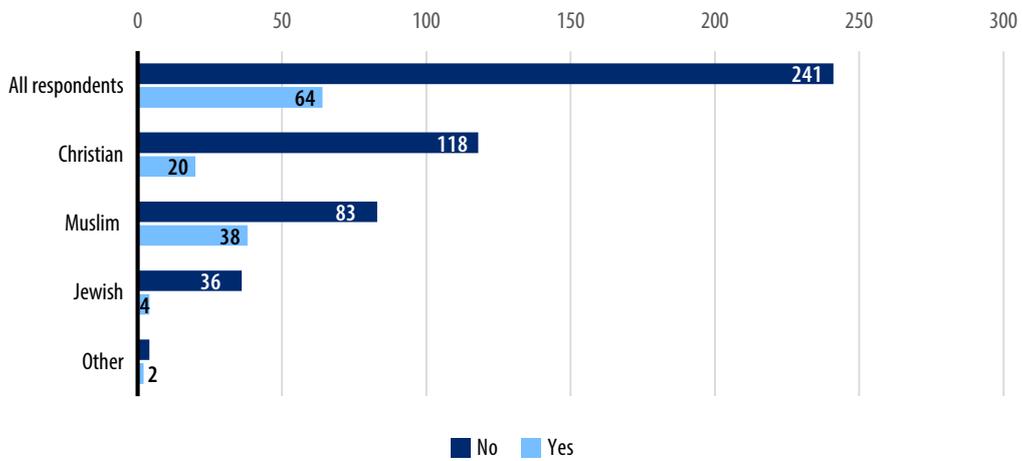
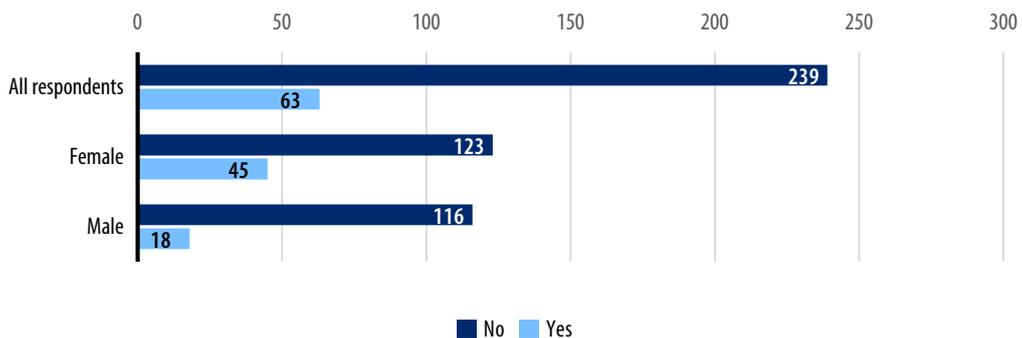


Diagram 10. Have you experienced that women face other threats that are directed solely at women, in addition to violence and threat of violence described above?



In their open-ended responses, the respondents emphasised sexual harassment and violence, as well as verbal violence against Muslim women in particular:

“Women are perceived as weak and they are more likely to be singled out. The dress of the women also differs from the mainstream population, which is why they stand out.”

Of all respondents, 93% thought that women’s safety issues had been taken into account as well as those of men at the religious premises they frequented. This opinion was held by 91% of female respondents, whereas 96% of male respondents said that women’s safety issues had been taken into account as well as those of men.

Of the Muslim respondents, 89% (104/117) thought that women’s safety issues had been taken into account at the mosque/prayer room as well as those of men. Ten women and three men disagreed. Of the Christian respondents, 98.5% thought that women’s safety issues had been taken into account at the church as well as those of men, with only two female Christian respondents disagreeing. Among Jewish respondents, 37 (of the 39 who responded to this question) thought that women’s safety issues were taken into account as well as those of men.

Three of the 13 Muslim woman respondents who thought that women’s safety issues had not been taken into account in the religious premises as well as those of men mentioned the following reasons for the differences between the men’s and women’s premises:

“The women’s prayer area only gets light from the men’s side.”

“There is CCTV on the men’s side but none on the women’s side, the last time I visited.”

“In Tampere, the entrance to the women’s prayer area is the same as to the supermarket, and this undermines safety”.

One male Muslim respondent highlighted the same aspect:

“The entrance for women is the same as to the adjacent supermarket and as far as I know, the door to the women’s area cannot be properly locked”.

3.2 Threat of violence from others using the premises

Ninety-three percent of all respondents stated that they had not observed any violence or threats of violence among the users of the premises

Violence or a threat of violence among the users of the premises had been observed by 3.8% of male respondents, compared to almost 10% of female respondents. It can be assumed that this difference between the genders is linked to gendered violence.

Among the different religious groups, Muslims had observed the least violence or threats of violence among the users of the premises (3.4% or 4/119 respondents). Three of 40 Jewish respondents and 13 of 137 Christian respondents (9.5%) had noticed violence or a threat of violence among the users of the premises.

Although not statistically representative, the figures are nonetheless noteworthy: Christian women were the group with the highest rate of having observed violence or threats of violence among the users of the premises. They accounted for nearly half of all respondents who had observed violence or threats of violence among the users of the premises (10/21).

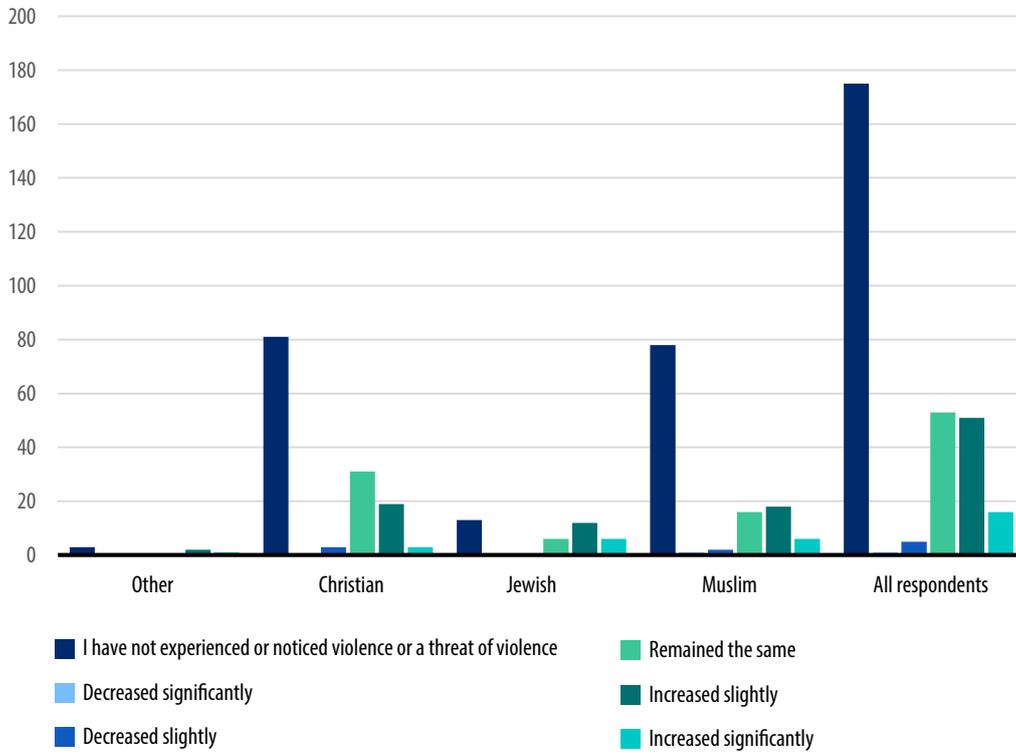
The questionnaire included an open-ended question asking respondents for more detail on the kind of threat and the premises where it was observed

The threats described in the responses were grouped into four categories: 1) the behaviour of people with mental health or substance abuse issues (especially relating to diaconal work), 2) threats from others (external), 3) racism and prejudice against immigrants, 4) judgment or verbal violence against those with different views. One respondent also mentioned homophobic statements at the religious premises as a threat.

3.3 Violence occurring in religious premises as a whole

Fewer than half of all respondents (42% or 126) had noticed violence or a threat of violence in the religious premises. Among the respondents, 17.6% (53) felt the amount of violence or threat of violence had remained the same while around 17% (51) felt that it had increased, with 5.3% of respondents (16) stating that it had increased significantly. Five respondents felt that the amount of violence had decreased and one respondent said that it had decreased significantly.

Diagram 11. Observations concerning violence and threat of violence



4 Measures to improve safety and security

The respondents were asked three questions on improving the safety and security of their respective religious premises: 1) what could the users of the premises do to improve safety and security, 2) what do the respondents wish the leaders of the community would do to improve safety and security, and 3) what should the police and the authorities do to improve the safety and security of religious premises.

Suggestions on how the users of the premises themselves could improve the safety and security of the premises were received from 59.5% of all respondents. Recurring responses included organising CCTV surveillance, security guards and/or doormen, keeping the doors locked, avoiding being alone on the premises, vigilance, monitoring, creating safety guidelines and clear escape routes, reporting and addressing unsafe/suspicious situations, and good behaviour.

“Locking the doors, CCTV, keeping dangerous items away from the premises or at least out of sight. Using lighting and increasing it. Overall vigilance.”

“take care of security, sufficient lighting, CCTV. And by addressing threatening situations.”

“Practical arrangements, security cameras, training and instructions.”

A few of the responses mentioned improving fire safety, safety and security training, and creating a safer space/friendly atmosphere.

“Avoid placing furniture, for example chairs, so that they prevent access. Think twice whether open flame, for example candles, is really necessary. If it is, then place the candles safely. Conscious practice in tolerating diversity.”

“Address the use of inappropriate language. Provide safer work areas for diaconal work, for example. Church staff could be more inclined to intervene and also keep an eye on public events.”

One respondent raised the topic of addressing homophobia.

“The entire culture should be changed so that different views regarding e.g. issues of sexual ethics would be tolerated and there would not be just one correct way of thinking and acting. It is totally impossible for a gay couple, for example, to attend church events publicly as a couple.”

All told, 179 of respondents, or 59%, responded to the question of what the leaders of the community should do to improve the safety and security of the religious premises.

Most of them mentioned hoping for the institution or improvement of CCTV, for example digital surveillance cameras, more surveillance cameras, recording cameras and cameras outside the premises.

“Install CCTV cameras to make it easier to see everything going on in the area”⁸

The respondents also suggested that the community should have a clear-cut plan and instructions on safety and security, as well as crisis plans and rescue plans. They also said that the plans should be reviewed and that staff should be provided with safety and security training.

“Stay alert to any possible threats and if there are any, inform the parish and the authorities. Prepare a plan to tackle crises. Prepare a crisis communications plan. Make sure there is a rescue plan.”

“Organise safety training for staff on how the community should respond to threatening situations.”

“Respectful and equal treatment of all.” Updating safety and security instructions and keeping them available. Safety and security drills for staff. Proper lighting on the premises and in the grounds. Chains of communication in order with the authorities and e.g. volunteer workers and spiritual welfare. Also joint exercises from time to time. Adequate staffing of events with people who are familiar with the premises.”

8 Response translated from the Somali: “Inay ku xiraan kaamaraddo nabadgalyada CCTV si ay u sahlanaato inay la socdaan wax walba oo ka dhacaya meesha”

Cooperation with the authorities and with other religions was a topic raised in a few responses.

“Good cooperation with local residents, businesses and authorities”

“Close cooperation with the leaders of other prayer rooms in the area and with the authorities.”

“Visible cooperation with other religious communities.”

According to some respondents, the leaders of the community should create an atmosphere of tolerance and use respectful language when speaking of other religions.

“Respectful and equal treatment of all (...)”

“(...) Seek to create an atmosphere of tolerance. Speak respectfully of other cultures and religions.

Two Muslim respondents brought up issues relating to the women’s entrance to the premises and supplied concrete suggestions:

“Their own separate entrance for women users of the Tampere Mosque, like they have at the Lahti Mosque. CCTV might be considered for the mosques in Tampere.”

“Take women better into account as users of the premises.” This includes offering women their own separate entrance and the option of locking the premises.”

Many of the respondents said that the leaders of the community were doing what they could to ensure safety and security.

The question of what the authorities (police, rescue, municipal authorities) should do to improve safety and security received responses from 60.8% of the respondents. A considerable number of respondents hoped that the police would have a more visible presence both on the streets and on their religious premises (especially on holy days) and also hoped for more police surveillance and patrols.

“A visible police presence gives a feeling of safety. I don’t know if it would be too much to have security at large events??? Helping hands for the police.?”

“Police close by on holy days”

“Add more patrols on certain days.”

A few of the respondents also expressed their hope that the police would be quick to respond and would take threats seriously.

“The police should take it seriously when a Muslim woman or man reports a threat of violence, for example. I haven’t experienced violence in our community but I have seen violence directed at us from the outside, and it seems that the police are not interested in this.”

“Take perceived and actual threats seriously. Concerns and threats are downplayed and chalked up to women being hysterical and over-protective (...)”

A few respondents emphasised anti-racism on the part of the authorities as an important factor in improving safety:

“Take the vandalism of these premises and the negative treatment of their members more seriously.”

“Zero tolerance for hate speech and racism (...)”

Some respondents suggested that the police could inform the communities of potential threats.

“It would be important to receive any information of potential risks occurring that the authorities might be aware of.”

Other suggestions included training provision, visits to the premises, funding to improve the safety and security of the premises, cooperation between communities, and better lighting on streets and access routes.

“ Work closely together with the communities. Provide funding/training to improve security measures.

“The streets should have sufficient lighting”

5 Contacting the police or another authority

Of all the respondents, 18% (53) had contacted the police when using the premises and in relation to safety and security. Most of them were Christian (31), 13 were Muslim, 7 Jewish and two of another faith.

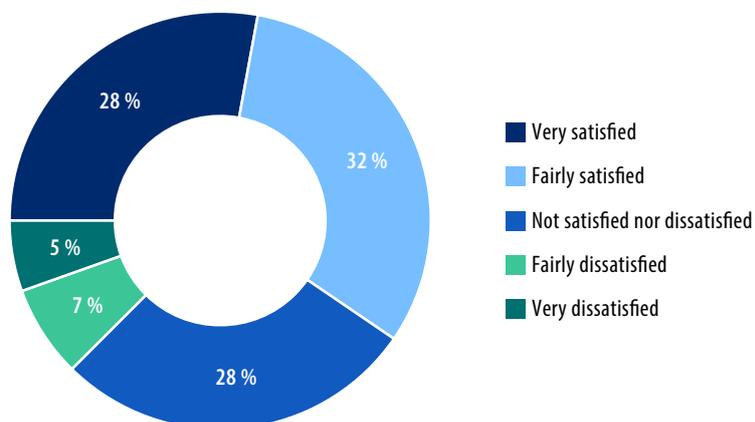
The police had been contacted by 23.3% of Christian respondents in relation matters of safety and security of their religious premises. The equivalent figures for Muslim and Jewish respondents were 10% and 17.5%, respectively.

Based on the responses, it seems that although Muslims (and Jews⁹) overall experience more violence or threat of violence than Christians, they contact the police less frequently than Christians.

One explanation for this might be that in these situations, Muslim respondents were less satisfied with the actions of the police and other authorities than Christian or Jewish respondents.

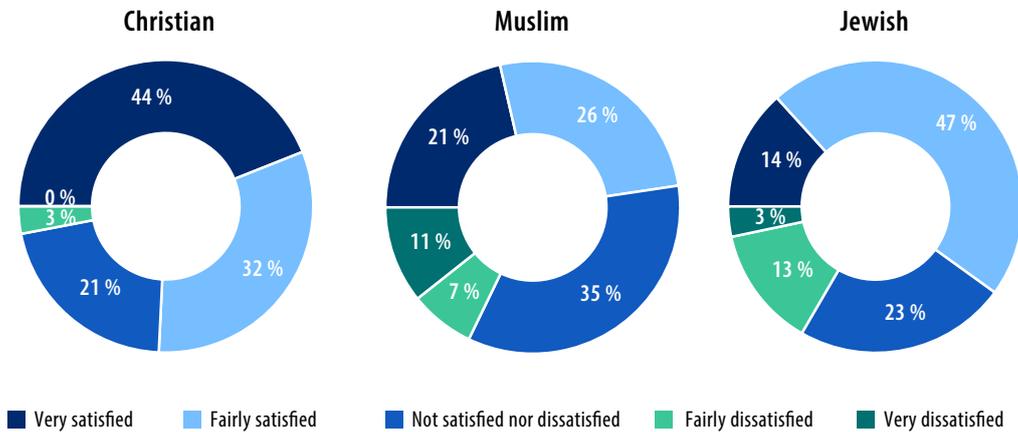
Less than half of Muslim respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the actions of the police or the authorities in the situations, whereas 44% of Christian respondents were very satisfied and 32% satisfied. Slightly over half of Jewish respondents were satisfied (43%) or very satisfied (12%) with the police or other authorities. Diagrams 12 and 13 illustrate the respondents' satisfaction with the police.

Diagram 12. How satisfied are you with the actions of the police or other authorities in the situation?



⁹ The figures are not statistically valid and comparisons therefore are difficult to make.

Diagram 13. Satisfaction of Christian, Muslim and Jewish respondents with the actions of the police or other authorities.



In one question, the respondents were asked to give the reason why they had contacted the police.

According to the responses, ten respondents had contacted the police because of intimidation or a threat, in nine occasions, it had to do with vandalism of the premises, and seven respondents reported having contacted the police because of a theft. Some respondents had contacted the police because of troublemakers on the premises and the need for police assistance for removing the troublemakers from the premises. Other responses to this question also included a sudden illness, racism, violent radicalisation, arson and attempted arson, as well as property damage. A few respondents also mentioned situations where there was no emergency and instead the police had been contacted for the purpose of training, security visits or reporting.

However, the questionnaire did not include a follow-up question that would have shed more light on the reasons for the respondents' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the police.

6 Safety and security instructions

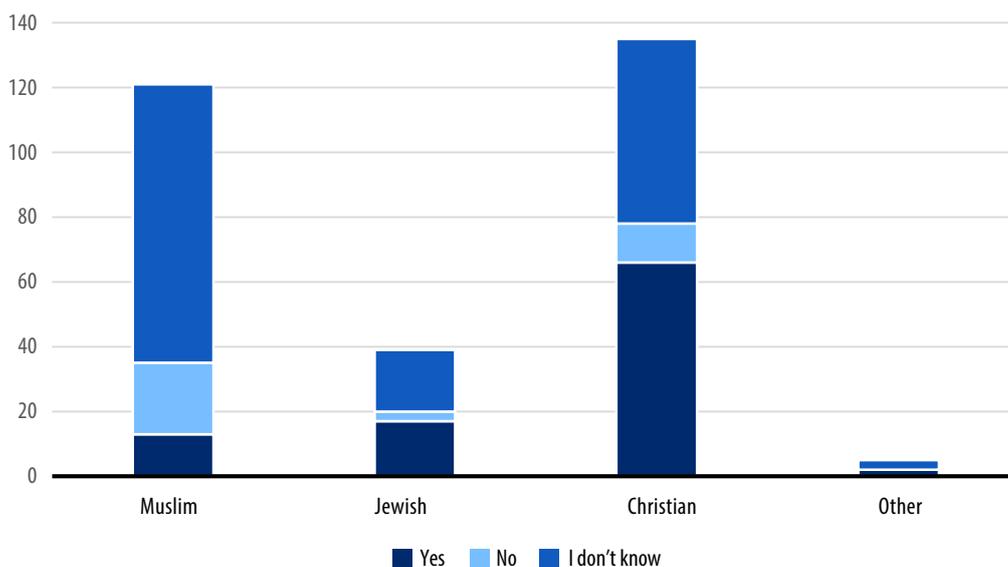
More than half of the respondents (55%) did not know if there were any written instructions on the safety and security of the religious premises they frequented. Around one third said that there were such instructions while 12% said that there were no such instructions in the religious premises they used.

Among Muslim respondents, 71% did not know whether there were written safety and security instructions for their premises, 18% said that there were no such instructions, and only 11% said that there were written instructions.

Among Christian respondents, 42% did not know if there were written safety and security instructions for their premises, 9% said that there were no such instructions, and 49% said that there were written instructions.

Among Jewish respondents, around half (19) did not know if there were written safety and security instructions for their synagogue, three (7.5%) said that there were no such instructions, and 17 said that there were written instructions.

Diagram 14. Are there any written instructions on the safety and security of the premises?



Those respondents who answered “Yes” to the question of whether there were safety and security instructions were asked a follow-up question on whether the instructions were available or accessible to the users of the premises. Although only 98 respondents said that there were instructions, 158 respondents answered the question of whether they were available and accessible. Consequently, 62 responses have been excluded from the analysis of this question¹⁰.

Of those who said that their premises had written safety and security instructions, 65% said that the instructions were available and accessible to the users of the premises. According to 12%, this was not the case, while 23% of respondents did not know if the instructions were available or accessible to them.

¹⁰ Fifty of them have answered that they did not know whether the instructions were accessible while twelve have stated that the instructions were not accessible.

Appendices

Decision to appoint the working group

Working group on improving the safety and security of the premises of religious communities

The Ministry of the Interior has today set up a working group tasked with identifying security threats to the premises of religious communities and drawing up proposals for improving their safety and security.

Term

1 August 2020 to 31 May 2021

Background

Security threats to the premises of religious communities and members of communities using the premises have increased. In particular, the security of the premises of Jewish and Islamic communities has deteriorated. These have been targets of terrorist acts in recent years; examples include the attack near a synagogue in Halle, Germany, and the attack on two mosques in New Zealand. Threats and vandalism against Jewish synagogues and Muslim prayer rooms/mosques have also increased in Finland.

There are differences in the security measures and safety and security skills between different communities. The safety and security skills of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and Jewish communities are at a good level, but there are also communities whose skills and measures should be improved.

The task of the working group is based on the Government Resolution on the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism, issued on 19 December 2019. The Action Plan includes a measure:
Investigating threats imposed on the premises of religious communities and organising training to improve their preparedness for security threats and crises. Preparing a premises safety manual for use by religious communities. Utilising international examples in the training.

Objectives

The aim of the work is to gather information on security threats against religious communities, in particular against Jewish synagogues and Muslim prayer rooms/mosques, and to make proposals on how to improve their safety and security through training, improving security measures and expertise in safety and security matters, and developing the organisation of security work.

Tasks

The tasks of the working group are:

- map the current state of security of religious communities and possible threats,
- draw up a plan on how to improve safety and security through training, carry out the training and, on this basis, issue recommendations on future training,
- prepare a proposal on how security measures and the security organisation should be developed, taking into account the existing good practices and experiences and what would be required in practice to increase security measures, and
- draw up a manual on the basis of the material produced in order to improve the safety and security of religious communities.

Organisation

The composition of the working group is as follows:

Tarja Mankkinen, Head of Development, Ministry of the Interior, Chair

Atik Ali, Master of Laws (Trained on the Bench), Finnish Muslim Network

Habiba Ali, Project Coordinator, Finn Church

Aid Abbas Bahmanpour, Imam, Resalat Islamic Society

Afrah Al Bayaty, Media and Communications Officer, Turku Islamic Society

Anas Hajjar, Imam, Finnish Islamic Society

Mustafa Kara, Imam, Tampere Islamic Society

Mika Kataja, Security Manager, Finn Church Aid

Hanna Kiiskinen, Senior Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Education and Culture

Ilpo Leino, Senior Advisor, Finnish National Rescue Association

Marcus Miramo, Head of Security, Jewish Community of Helsinki, (also representing the Jewish Community of Turku)

Petri Määttä, Executive Director of Department for Parish Services, Church Council

Jari Pajunen, Chief Superintendent, Ministry of the Interior

The working group will consult representatives of religious communities during the work to ensure that the views of different communities will be taken into account in the work as widely as possible. If necessary, the working group may also consult other experts.

In the appointment of the working group, the aim was to observe section 4a of the Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/1986). The majority of those appointed to the working group are men, which is justified in terms of their expertise and duties.

Costs and funding

The members of the working group will carry out the work as part of their official duties. Travel expenses may be paid to members other than public officials. Such costs must always be agreed in advance.

On behalf of the Permanent Secretary

On behalf of the Director General Katriina Laitinen

Automaattisesti päivittyvä allekirjoitusfraasi. älä poista tätä kenttää, jos allekirjoitat asiakirjan sähköisesti.

Circulation Members of the working group

CC Minister of the Interior Ohisalo
 State Secretary Parviainen
 Special Adviser Kerman
 Special Adviser Lappalainen
 Special Adviser Laaksonen
 Police Director Gerkman
 Ministry of Education and Culture
 Communications Unit of the Ministry of the Interior
 National Police Board



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