

Have you been the victim of a crime? Don't you know what to do and what are your rights?

In this video, we will explain to you who is considered a victim of a crime and what rights belong to victims of such acts: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V85gEcxaqHI&t=8s>

A victim of a crime is any person to whom harm has been caused by another person who committed a crime, whether it is bodily injury, property damage or psychological damage, such as stress or anxiety. You are a victim of a crime even though you were unaffected by harm.

Anyone of us can become a victim of crime, regardless of gender, race, nationality or religion. It doesn't matter whether the perpetrator is identified and punished. It doesn't matter if you reported the crime to the police. If you have suffered harm as a direct result of the crime, then you are the victim.

How do you know you've been the victim of a hate crime?

A hate crime means any prejudiced physical, verbal or other attack against you because of your specific trait, such as skin color or religion. Victims of hate crimes are seen as particularly vulnerable victims; as a result, these people are entitled to a higher, extended scope of protection from the state.

As a victim of a crime, you have several rights which you can exercise:

- First of all, you have the right to turn to organizations that provide professional legal, social and psychological help and support to victims of crime.
- Then you have the right to report a crime to the police. If you decide to do this, you can bring the so-called "confidant" with you. That is someone you know, trust, and who will be your support. Once at the police, you can also be accompanied by a lawyer or an attorney who will ensure that the law is respected.
- The police is obligated to provide you with information about the possibility of filing a complaint and information about the next steps after filing a complaint.
- At the police station, you will have the space and time to describe in your own words what happened to you. It is essential that you indicate anything that you can remember in connection with the attack.
- The police has an obligation to treat you sensitively and to listen to you, always recognizing that you are the victim of a crime.
- Don't be afraid to report a hate attack to the police! The fact that you are a victim of a crime will not have a negative impact on your asylum procedure or on your already granted stay in Slovakia. Filing a complaint cannot be a ground for expulsion either.
- Filing a complaint begins criminal proceedings, that is, state proceedings in which a criminal investigation will be opened and the perpetrator will be punished. You don't have to file a



complaint yourself; it can be filed on your behalf by someone else or by another organization. In any case, if you are the victim of a crime, the police will summon you to testify.

In criminal proceedings, the person who has suffered harm as a result of a crime **is called the aggrieved party.**

Unlike the victim, aggrieved party represents a party to the criminal proceedings, which means that national authorities such as the police, the prosecution or the court actively communicate with him or her.

Therefore, each aggrieved party is also the victim of a crime. However, not all victims of crime are also aggrieved parties. This possibility can occur if you, as the victim of a crime, make a decision not to report the crime to the police and the police was not informed otherwise. In practice, there are also situations where the police have been notified and a crime investigation has been opened, but the police ignores the fact that you are the victim of said crime. In this case, if you wish to be recognized as an aggrieved party and exercise the rights associated with this status, we recommend that you contact the police or the prosecution immediately and without delay.

As an aggrieved party, you have the right, for example, to consult the file, to submit evidence in your favor, to participate in hearings, but also to appeal a decision rendered by the court if you want to challenge a decision made at first instance.

Throughout the criminal proceedings, i.e. in the police, but also in court, you may be represented by an attorney. This must be a person with legal education, ideally a lawyer with experience representing victims in criminal proceedings. This representative will be present with you at all proceedings, you will be able to consult him on your rights and obligations and he will explain the content of the documents to you.

As an aggrieved party, you are certainly interested in the length of the criminal proceedings. It's very individual, but criminal proceedings in Slovakia usually take months or even years. During the entire period, you may have to testify several times about the attack. Such an experience can be difficult and exhausting, so don't be ashamed to contact a psychologist if necessary.

If the crime caused you damage, you have the right to claim compensation from the perpetrator. If you are the victim of a violent crime, you are entitled to compensation from the state, under certain conditions.

If you do not speak Slovak well enough, you have the right to an interpreter. Do not be afraid to take advantage of this right, even if you think you can communicate in Slovak without any problem. At the police or during the provision of legal services, specific terms that you have probably never heard before are often used; their misunderstanding on your part can have serious negative consequences for the rest of the investigation. Never sign documents whose content has not been explained and interpreted to you.



If you believe that you have been the victim of a hate crime committed in connection with your nationality, citizenship, religion or, in general, your status as a foreigner, and you would like to have more information on your rights, please contact us. We are at your disposal, ready to help you.

