

ptu politikernas
trygghetsundersökning

The Politician's Safety Survey 2023

**The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) -
centre for knowledge about crime and crime prevention
measures**

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The Politician's Safety Survey 2023

English summary of Brå report 2023:14

Summary

This statistical report presents the overall results of the Politician’s Safety Survey (PTU) for the period 2012–2022. The results of the report are summarised here, divided into the sections *Victimisation among elected representatives*, *Concern among elected representatives*, *Consequences of victimisation and concern*, *Police reports and other reporting* and *Support and security measures*. Of the roughly 13,700 elected representatives that constituted the sample population for the PTU for 2023, just over 8,000 individuals participated.

Victimisation among elected representatives

In the PTU, elected representatives are asked to respond to questions concerning self-reported victimisation during the previous calendar year. This means that the PTU for 2023 describes victimisation experienced during the 2022 election year. Victimisation is presented as a proportion of exposed individuals, with the exception of the section concerning situations, perpetrators and motives, where it is presented as the number of incidents.

Total victimisation

- In total, 29.5 per cent of the elected representatives stated that, during 2022, they had been the victim of some form of *threat or harassment*, or of *violence, vandalism or theft*.
- The proportion of victimised elected representatives is larger during election years compared to the intervening years. The proportion of victimised respondents in the 2022 election year was slightly lower than in the 2018 election year (29.5 per cent compared to 32.6 per cent). Patterns and levels are similar for both women and men, but from 2018 and onwards, we see a slightly higher proportion of women than men reporting that they have been victimised, a gap that has widened over time.
- In total, 16.4 per cent of those who had been victimised during 2022 stated that this concerned a single incident, 51.9 per cent stated that it happened between two and five times, and 31.7 per cent stated that they had been victimised on six or more occasions.
- A total of 31.0 per cent of the female elected representatives and 28.3 per cent of the males stated that they had been victimised at least

once during 2022.

- According to the results of the survey, younger elected representatives are most victimised, with the proportion decreasing successively the older the age group studied. Of the elected representatives aged 29 years or younger, 44.4 per cent stated that they had been victimised during 2022, compared to 17.0 per cent among the oldest age group (70 years or older).
- As for elected representatives with a non-Swedish background, roughly the same proportion as those with a Swedish background state that they were victimised during 2022 (30.4 per cent and 29.5 per cent, respectively).
- The proportion of those victimised during 2022 was largest within the Green Party (48.1 per cent) and smallest within the Christian Democrats (23.8 per cent).
- Victimisation is greater among elected representatives in the Swedish national parliament than in municipal and regional assemblies, among those in executive committees than in assemblies, and among those elected chairs compared to those holding other offices.
- The proportion of victimised elected representatives sitting in municipal assemblies in 2022 was greatest in the metropolitan municipalities (Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö), where just over half (52.2 per cent) of the elected representatives stated that they had been victimised. The proportion victimised was lowest in commuter municipalities close to smaller towns/urban areas (21.3 per cent).
- Victimisation increases with the elected representative's level of exposure (the extent to which they are active on social media, the extent to which they are written or spoken about in the media, and the extent to which they feel they are recognised by the public).

Threats and harassment

- 28.3 per cent of the elected representatives stated that in 2022 they had been the victim of some form of threat or harassment as a result of their elected position.
- Victimisation in the form of threats and harassment is greater during election years than in the intervening years. The highest proportion was during the 2018 election year (31.6 per cent).
- A total of 29.7 per cent of women and 27.3 per cent of men stated that they had been the victim of threats or harassment during 2022. The pattern over time has been similar for both women and men, although

the proportion has been higher among women since 2018.

- As in previous years, the most common incident in 2022 took the form of threats or attacks via social media. A total of 16.4 per cent of the elected representatives stated that they had been victimised in this way.

Violence, vandalism and theft

- 5.3 per cent of the elected representatives stated that they had been the victim of some form of violence, vandalism or theft as a result of their elected position.
- The proportion victimised in this way has been higher during election years than in the intervening years.
- In previous surveys, the proportion reporting victimisation had been higher among men than among women. However, since 2020, the proportions have been essentially the same for women and men.
- Jostling and similar contact was the most commonly experienced form of violence. It is considerably less common that the elected representatives state that they have been the victims of more serious violence, in the form of punches, kicks or similar, or in the form of violence with a weapon.

Attempted corruption

- A total of 3.1 per cent of the elected representatives stated that they had been the victim of some form of attempted corruption in 2022.
- The proportion victimised in this way was slightly higher in 2012–2016 compared to 2018–2022. Unlike the other questions in the survey, here we see no clear differences between election years and intervening years.
- A higher proportion of women than men stated that they had been the victim of attempted corruption in 2022 (3.5 per cent and 2.9 per cent, respectively). This was also the case in previous years, with the exception of 2018, when women and men were victimised to the same extent.
- The most common form of attempted corruption is friendship-based corruption, whereby a person close to the elected representative attempts to exploit their relationship in order to gain some form of advantage.

Situations, perpetrators and motives

- In most incidents during 2022, the perpetrator was either unknown or anonymous.
- In those instances where the victim had an idea of the perpetrator's identity, it was most often a man estimated to be aged 45–64 years, who was acting alone and was perceived as a disgruntled citizen.
- In around half of the incidents, the perpetrator was linked to some form of group, according to the victim, which was most often a far-right or racist group.
- The incidents are most commonly linked to a statement or opinion expressed by the elected representative.
- In most cases, the victim stated that the main objective of the perpetrator was to humiliate or insult them.
- In total, 8.6 per cent of those victimised in 2022 stated that there had been some verbal, written or physical attack of a sexual nature in conjunction with the incident or one of the incidents. In this regard there is a clear gender difference, as this was reported by 11.9 per cent of the victimised women, whilst the corresponding proportion for men was 5.9 per cent.

Concern among elected representatives

The elected representatives are also asked to respond to a question regarding their level of concern during the previous calendar year. This means that the PTU for 2023 describes the concern experienced during 2022. The question addresses whether they had felt concerned that either they themselves would be the victims of crime or similar unpleasant events as a result of their political position, or that another person close to them would be victimised. Concern among elected representatives is reported as a proportion of all elected representatives and as a proportion of victimised representatives.

Concern among all elected representatives

- In total, 28.2 per cent of all elected representatives stated that, during 2022, they had felt concerned that either they themselves would be the victims of crime or similar unpleasant events, or that another person close to them would be victimised.
- Over time, the proportion of elected representatives who had felt concerned increased between the 2014 and 2018 election years (from 25.8 per cent to 29.7 per cent), before decreasing slightly to 28.2 per

cent in the 2022 election year.

- A total of 32.3 per cent of the female elected representatives and 25.0 per cent of the men stated that they had felt concerned at least once during 2022. Compared to the men, the women have had a higher proportion feeling concerned since 2016, and that gap widened in 2022.
- The proportion that felt concerned during 2022 was highest within the age group 29 years and younger (49.0 per cent). The corresponding proportion among the oldest age group (70 years or older) was 10.3 per cent.
- The proportion was higher among elected representatives with a non-Swedish background, compared to those with a Swedish background (36.3 per cent and 27.3 per cent, respectively).

Concern among victimised elected representatives

- Concern among those elected representatives that had been the victims of some form of incident during 2022 followed the same distribution patterns as regards gender and age as among all elected representatives, although at higher levels.
- In total, 52.9 per cent of victimised elected representatives stated that, during 2022, they had felt concerned that either they themselves would be the victims of crime or similar unpleasant events, or that another person close to them would be victimised.
- As with all elected representatives, concern increased between the 2014 and 2018 election years (from 51.4 to 55.1 per cent), before decreasing to 52.9 per cent in 2022.
- A total of 57.9 per cent of the victimised women and 48.7 per cent of the men stated that they had felt concerned at least once during 2022. Although this gender gap was seen in several previous years, it was larger in 2022.
- The proportion of those victimised who also felt concern is greater the younger the age group studied.
- Of those victimised with a non-Swedish background, 65.2 per cent stated that they had felt concerned during 2022, compared to 51.4 per cent among those victimised with a Swedish background.

Consequences of victimisation and concern

The elected representatives are also asked to respond to a question regarding the consequences of their victimisation and concern during the

previous calendar year. This means that the PTU for 2023 describes the consequences during 2022. The consequences of victimisation and concern are reported as a proportion of all the elected representatives, and as a proportion of those victimised.

Consequences among all elected representatives

- In total, 25.0 per cent of all elected representatives stated that, during 2022, they were affected in their elected role, either in their considerations or their actual actions, as a result of victimisation or concern about being victimised.
- The proportion increased from 22.7 per cent in the 2014 election year to 25.5 per cent in the 2018 election year, remaining at about the same level in the 2022 election year.
- For 2022, 30.4 per cent of the women stated that they had been affected by victimisation or their concern about being victimised, compared to 20.7 per cent of the men.

Consequences among victimised elected representatives

- The consequences among those elected representatives that had been the victims of some form of incident during 2022 followed the same distribution patterns as among all elected representatives.
- Of all elected representatives that had been victimised during 2022, 43.3 per cent stated that they had been affected in their elected role, either in their considerations or their actual actions.
- Of the women who had been victimised during 2022, 50.1 per cent stated that they had been affected by the victimisation or their concern about being victimised, compared to 37.4 per cent of the men.
- Those who avoided engaging or expressing themselves in a particular issue as a result of victimisation and/or their concern stated that this most often concerned issues regarding racism, immigration, migration or integration. Other such issues include LGBTQI issues, gender equality and feminism, climate change, wind power, animal and agricultural issues, the closure of community facilities, school matters, healthcare and social care. Many elected representatives also stated that it was not a case of a particular issue, but rather that they kept a low profile in general.

Police reports and other reporting

The PTU examines how common it is for the incidents to be reported to the police, or to be reported in any other way. Those who have been victimised are also asked to describe their personal experiences of the police, and to state why they chose not to report an incident to the police. The results are presented as a proportion of incidents.

Police reports

- A total of 16.3 per cent of incidents in 2022 that concerned either threats and harassment or violence, vandalism and theft were reported to the police. A slightly higher proportion of incidents affecting female elected representatives were reported compared to incidents affecting men (17.5 per cent compared to 15.3 per cent).
- The proportion of incidents reported in 2022 is the same as in 2020. In previous years, the proportion of incidents reported to the police has been around 17–19 per cent.
- A total of 37.1 per cent of incidents that included violence, vandalism or theft were reported to the police, compared to 12.5 per cent of those that involved threats and harassment.

Experiences of the police

- In almost half of the instances (48.4 per cent) in 2022 in which those victimised were in contact with the police, they had very or quite positive experiences of the police. The proportion of instances in which those victimised in 2022 had very or quite negative experiences of the police was 23.8 per cent.
- Women were considerably more likely to report positive experiences of the police than men, while men were more likely to report very or quite negative experiences.
- Up until 2016, there was a decrease in the proportion of incidents where those victimised had positive experiences of the police (from 56.0 per cent in 2012 to 41.6 per cent in 2016). In 2018, however, the proportion increased to 54.9 per cent, and then decreased again to 48.4 per cent in 2022.

Why incidents were not reported to the police

- Those victims who did not report incidents to the police most often stated that they did not believe that doing so would lead anywhere.

Many also regarded the incident as a trivial matter, or as just part of the role of being an elected representative.

- There was a higher proportion of incidents aimed at men that were not reported to the police because they did not believe it would lead anywhere or because the incident was regarded as a trivial matter, whilst there was a higher proportion of incidents aimed at women that were not reported to the police because they regarded them as just part of the role of being an elected representative.

Other reporting of incidents

- In total, 46.6 per cent of incidents in 2022 were reported to a party other than the police. A higher proportion of incidents aimed at female elected representatives were reported to a party other than the police than incidents aimed at male elected representatives (50.0 per cent compared to 43.8 per cent).
- The most common outcome was that the incident had been reported to a security officer, within either their own party or the political institution.

Support and security measures

The elected representatives are also asked to state whether they are aware of the existence of either an action plan for the victimisation of elected representatives or a security officer whom they could contact. They are also asked questions about their need for support and whether they have received support, as well as which security measures have been implemented. The reference period is the previous calendar year (2022), with the exception of the question relating to security officers and action plans, where the question concerns the time of the survey (2023). The results for support and assistance are presented as a proportion of incidents, whilst the results relating to security officers, action plans and security procedures are presented as a proportion of people.

Awareness of security officers and action plans

- A total of 20.7 per cent of the elected representatives did not know whether an action plan existed, whilst 17.6 per cent did not know whether there was a security officer whom they could contact.
- Both proportions are slightly higher than in 2020, although the proportion has fallen considerably since 2012.
- A higher proportion of women than men are unaware of whether an

action plan is in place. Moreover, a higher proportion of women than men are unaware of whether there is a security officer whom they could contact.

Support and assistance

- A total of 6.2 per cent of the incidents in 2022 resulted in a quite or very large need for support or assistance. In 28.1 per cent of the incidents, the need was very or quite small, and in 65.7 per cent of incidents, there was no need for support or assistance.
- A higher proportion of women than men stated that they had needed support and assistance. For 2022, a quite or very large need for support and assistance was reported in 8.0 per cent of the incidents aimed at women, and in 4.6 per cent of incidents aimed at men.
- In 41.7 per cent of cases, those reporting a quite or very large need for support and assistance stated that they had received the support and assistance they needed. In 21.2 per cent of cases, however, they had not received any support at all.

Security measures

- A total of 29.7 per cent of those victimised during 2022 stated that security measures had been implemented afterwards.
- The proportion was roughly the same among victimised women and victimised men (30.6 per cent and 29.0 per cent, respectively).
- The most common measures were that the victimised person changed their routines or behaviour, and that they were given information about security and the exercising of caution.

Incidents associated with election campaigning

- In slightly more than six out of ten incidents (61.6 per cent), those victimised were of the opinion that it was primarily due to election campaigning. There is no major difference between men and women (60.7 per cent compared to 62.6 per cent). This was roughly the same proportion as during the 2018 election campaigns (60.8 per cent) but higher than during the 2014 election campaigns (57.0 per cent).
- The increase is mainly seen among women (from 53.8 per cent in 2014 to 62.6 per cent in 2022), while the proportion of victimised men who associate the incident with election campaigning has not increased as much (59.2 per cent in 2014 and 60.7 per cent in 2022).

- Being exposed to a spoken threat face-to-face was considerably more common among incidents linked to election campaigning (29.2 per cent) than among incidents not linked to election campaigning (9.9 per cent).



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