Jewish woman in her 70s stabbed in suspected Ottawa hate crime

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/jewish-woman-in-her-70s-stabbed-in-suspected-ottawa-hate-crime/>

A Jewish woman in her 70s was stabbed at a grocery store in Ottawa in a suspected hate crime, according to local police and Jewish organizations.

The incident took place on Wednesday at Loblaws, a chain known for its large selection of kosher products. Police said that around 1:35 p.m., the victim entered the store with a friend before being approached by a man who stabbed her, leaving her with serious wounds. The woman was taken to the hospital and has since been released, police said.

The Jewish Federation of Ottawa said on Facebook Thursday that it was ‘deeply shaken’ by the stabbing and was ‘relieved to know that the victim, a cherished member of our community, is recovering.’

‘At this time, there is no indication of increased risk to Jewish facilities or institutions,’ said the Federation, praising law enforcement’s response to the incident. ‘At the same time, we are strengthening community security infrastructure.’

The suspect, a 71-year-old male, has been charged in court with aggravated assault and possession of a dangerous weapon, police said, adding that the investigation was being supported by the department’s Hate and Bias Crimes Unit.

While police and most reports on the stabbing did not name the suspect, he was identified by B’nai Brith Canada and the [Ottawa Citizen](https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/man-71-charged-after-woman-stabbed-in-grocery-store-at-college-square) newspaper as Joseph Rooke of Cornwall, Ontario.

A [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/jsrooke1) matching those details contained several posts against Israel, Jews and religion at large. The posts included accusations that the ‘biblically contrived’ Jewish state was committing atrocities in Gaza and that Jews ‘have become insidious in government, businesses, media conglomerates and educational institutions.’

Canada has seen a sharp rise in [antisemitism](https://www.timesofisrael.com/montreal-police-probing-attack-on-jewish-man-in-front-of-his-two-children/) since the war in Gaza was sparked by the Hamas onslaught of October 7, 2023. B’nai Brith Canada said in a report earlier this year that antisemitic incidents in the country have almost doubled since the war began.

‘For months, B’nai Brith Canada has warned Canadian leaders of the dangers of allowing hate to foment unchecked on our streets and online platforms,’ the organization wrote on X Friday. ‘Sadly, our warnings have gone unheeded.’