

# Radical anti-feminism the most prevalent form of violent extremism in Australia, report finds

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Nearly 20% of Australian men believe that feminism should be violently resisted, if necessary, new research from the University of Melbourne

and the University of Queensland has found.

For their newly published [report](#), researchers surveyed 1,020 people from across Australia and found that misogynistic beliefs were a significant predictor of most forms of [violent extremism](#). The researchers also found if authorities recognized anti-feminist beliefs as a separate form of violent extremism, it would represent the most prevalent form of violent extremism in Australia today.

Among men surveyed, 19.4% believed it was legitimate to violently resist [feminism](#) and over 30% of all respondents agreed or slightly agreed with statements expressing hostile sexist views.

Report author University of Melbourne Dr. Sara Meger said the results showed the urgent need for [security](#) and policing agencies to take misogynistic and racist attitudes seriously as predictors of violent extremism, regardless of ideological or religious motivations.

"In light of the apparent targeting of women during the Bondi stabbings and the ongoing national domestic violence crisis, it is imperative that misogynistic attitudes be treated as a serious predictor of violent extremism, or we risk mistaking a deeply rooted and widespread security threat as just individualized and unconnected offending," Dr. Meger said.

"We were surprised by how prevalent anti-feminist violent extremist attitudes were in the responses. While existing early intervention strategies recognize the need to address societal drivers of radicalization, the role of gender is largely unaddressed in this policy environment."

The report aimed to examine the relationship between various attitudes and support for violent extremism among the general public in Australia.

In 2021, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) reclassified the terms it used to describe all forms of violent extremism to be either ideologically motivated or religiously motivated, arguing that the use of specific political or religious distinctions were both a distraction from the true nature of the threat and no longer useful descriptors of emerging forms of violent extremism.

The report recommended that misogynist and racist attitudes needed to be recognized as significant predictors of violent extremism and that both security and policing agencies should co-operate with programs on gender-based and [family violence](#) to develop better risk assessment tools, early warning systems, and rehabilitation and reintegration programs for violent extremist offenders.

**More information:** Misogyny, Racism and Violent Extremism in Australia. [hdl.handle.net/11343/345673](https://hdl.handle.net/11343/345673)

Provided by University of Melbourne

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