

OBSERVATORY ON
INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN EUROPE

2015 REPORT



**SPECIAL FOCUS ON
CHRISTIAN REFUGEES
IN EUROPE**

OBSERVATORY ON
INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN EUROPE

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Who we are

The Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe is a registered non-governmental organisation in Austria. The Observatory investigates, documents, and reports cases of marginalization of Christians in Europe. Since 2005, we have published more than 1,600 cases of intolerance and discrimination against Christians in Europe.

The Observatory briefs international government organisations and offers its findings to politicians, NGOs, journalists and interested individuals through our website, newsletters, press releases, and the annual report. The Observatory is a member of the Fundamental Rights Platform of the EU-Fundamental Rights Agency.

The Observatory's task is to analyse the situation for Christians in Europe. We do so not in order to compare or diminish the persecution they experience in other parts of the world, but to stay vigilant in the protection of human rights.

Our work aims at encouraging victims of intolerance and discrimination to tell their stories, and to raise awareness among all people of good will that the phenomenon ought to be taken seriously and is in need of a common response.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) published its annual report on hate crimes in the year 2014 on November 16, 2015. The report provides an overview of data collected on hate crimes, and of responses to hate crimes and portrays countless hate crimes against Christians. In 2014, the Observatory submitted data about cases from 14 countries that were included in the final report.¹ For the year 2015, the Observatory submitted a 125-page report documenting hate crimes against Christians in Europe.²

Report a case!

- Have you been discriminated against on account of your Christian faith?
- Have you been verbally attacked when expressing a Christian position?
- Do you know someone who has been mistreated because they are Christian?
- Have you seen any media reports that concern you?

If so, please email us your story at:

observatory@intoleranceagainstchristians.eu

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Introduction

According to the Open Doors World Watch List, 2015 was the worst year in modern history for the persecution of Christians. The European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the House of Commons of the United Kingdom, the United States Department of State, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Pope Francis and Cyril, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, and many political and faith leaders have all labelled the systematic targeting and killing of Christians and other religious minorities in Iraq and Syria as genocide.

In 2015, Europe faced its greatest crisis in recent years with the unrelenting flow of refugees and migrants. As of the end of December 2015, over one million irregular migrants and refugees had arrived in Europe. Fifty per cent of those arrivals were Syrians fleeing the war in their country.³

With this, a new challenge for Europe has emerged: the protection of the most vulnerable asylum seekers – Christians fleeing persecution and genocide. After they have risked their lives to reach the safety of Europe, they have been met with violence, threats, and discrimination on the basis of their Christian faith at the hands of fellow migrants and, in some cases, the guards in refugee camps.

We recognise that the arrival of so many refugees has given rise to ugly instances of xenophobia and anti-Muslim bias across Europe. It is not our intention to exacerbate that problem, but rather, to draw attention to the plight of Christians here in Europe. As Cardinal Woelki of Cologne warned at an ecumenical service in February, **“Concern is growing that politicians and the authorities might not be taking such threats seriously enough. Christian persecution is not a topic of bygone ages.”**⁴

In addition to the problems facing Christian refugees and asylum seekers, we have seen other disturbing trends relating to religious liberty, freedom of expression and conscience, and a stunning amount of vandalism of churches.

In 2015, churches all over Europe were vandalized, robbed, and burned; violent counter-demonstrations threatened Pro-Life manifestations; public figures and organizations who stand up for life and human dignity were subjected to threats, incitements to violence, and property damage; conscientious objection for medical providers was either absent or at risk in several countries; private individuals had to choose between their livelihoods and their religious beliefs; ‘anti-extremism’ legislation threatened Christian school programs and freedom of expression; and Christ was removed from Christmas in cities all over Europe.

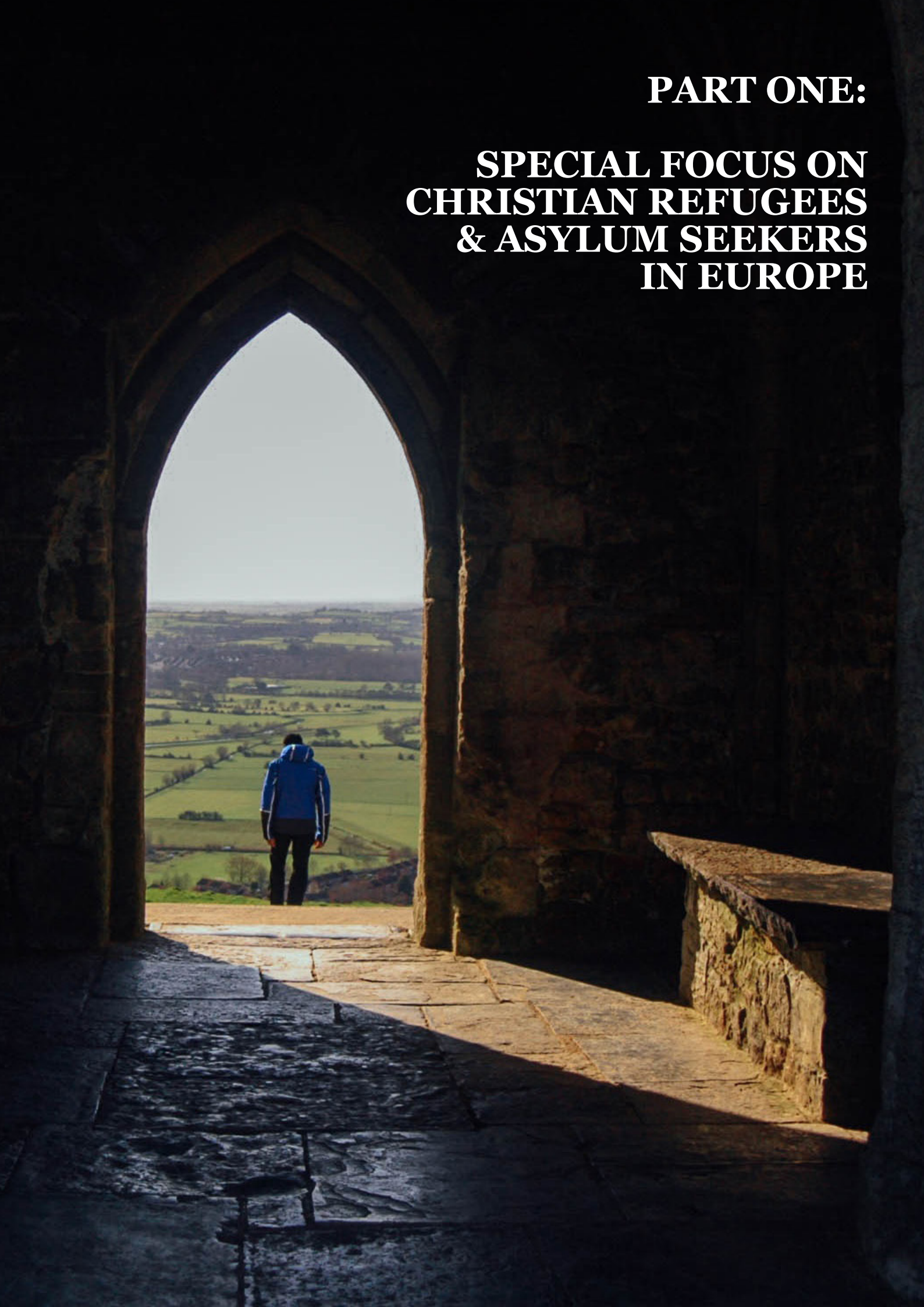
Each year, as part of our annual report, we take an in-depth look at a particular issue. This year, our special focus is on Christian refugees and asylum seekers in Europe. In Chapter One, we describe the particular problems they face, and in Chapter Two, we describe responses, potential solutions, and offer our recommendations to policymakers and aid organisations.

In Part Two, we provide short descriptions of cases of intolerance or discrimination against Christians in Europe in 2015, along with links for more information.

Ellen Kryger Fantini
Executive Director
Vienna, May 2016

PART ONE:

**SPECIAL FOCUS ON
CHRISTIAN REFUGEES
& ASYLUM SEEKERS
IN EUROPE**



Chapter One

The Problem for Christian Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Europe

We begin the description of this issue with the example of Germany. The number of Christians who applied for asylum in Germany rose from 42,526 in 2014 to 69,591 in 2015. When these numbers are compared with the numbers of applicants of Muslim faith, 109,595 in 2014 and 344,593 in 2015, it is clear that Christians are the minority.⁵

In Germany, Christian refugees and asylum seekers have been met with violence, threats, and discrimination on the basis of their Christian faith at the hands of fellow migrants and, in some cases, the guards in refugee camps. Philosopher Robert Spaemann has noted that some Christian refugees were living as they had in the countries they fled: in terrible conditions, vulnerable, and suffering discrimination.⁶

“The situation in refugee camps, especially in Berlin is very dramatic”, said Pastor Gottfried Martens of the Trinity Lutheran Church in Berlin. Around 1,000 refugees from Iran, Afghanistan and the Arabic world visit his community.⁷

“One must remember that the refugees come from regions in the Middle East where a religious war has been going on for years,” said Paulus Kurt, the refugee agent from the Central Council for Oriental Christians in Germany (ZOCD). “These people have fought each other there and now they are sleeping in the same room.”⁸

The Muslim majority sets the tone, according to Andreas Thiermeyer, Commissioner for Refugees of the Diocese of Eichstätt. When asked about the situation for Christian refugees, Thiermeyer responded “if they are housed locally, then it's fine. But if they live in accommodation centres, they often have difficulties. 95 to 98 per cent of the population are Muslims. And who has the majority, sets the tone. Some Christians do not even dare to profess their religion because they are afraid of being bullied.”⁹

On May 11, 2016, Open Doors¹⁰ Germany, published a report entitled ‘Religiously motivated attacks on Christian refugees in Germany’, outlining the results of a survey of 231 Christian

refugees in temporary accommodations in Germany who had experienced harassment or violence on the grounds of their faith. 88% of the respondents were harassed, threatened or attacked by other migrants and 49% of them reported being harassed by guards. Those numbers are even higher in asylum centres in Berlin, where 69% of 124 people were subjected to discrimination by guards and 92% by other migrants.¹¹

About 42% of the respondents reported insults by Muslim migrants, 37% were physically injured and 32% received death threats because of their religion. Others have been the victims of theft, as well as being threatened or disturbed during the night.¹²

“These people have fought each other there and now they are sleeping in the same room.”

Paulus Kurt, refugee agent, ZOCD

Only one in five of those surveyed had been to the police or centre authorities to report an incident, while the majority chose to withhold their statements for fear of repeat offenses or further aggravating the situation. According to Open Doors, rarely were any steps taken to offer the victims protection and often the complainants were not taken seriously or were faced with counter-complaints about their own conduct, which made their situations worse.

Finally, language barriers posed additional problems, as some migrants are not able to accurately communicate their complaints or unsympathetic translators were used and relayed false information.¹³

According to Volker Baumann from Action on Behalf of Persecuted Christians and the Needy

(AVC), as many as 40,000 Christian refugees and members of other religious minorities are being harassed for their religious beliefs in German centres.¹⁴

“It is sobering to hear persecuted Christians telling a Western country that they recognise the very same persecution patterns ... as in their home countries.”

Thomas Müller, Open Doors

Thomas Müller, an Open Doors persecution analyst, said: “Christian refugees from many different countries are trying and failing to find safety in Europe and it is likely that the report only shows the tip of the iceberg. It is clear that many Christian refugees – especially those who are converts to the Christian faith – live in fear of persecution from Muslim refugees who make up the majority of residents in the refugee hostels set up throughout Europe. It is sobering to hear persecuted Christians telling a Western country that they recognise the very same persecution patterns in operation as in their home countries.”¹⁵

Discrimination, Threats, and Assaults by Other Refugees

In the last year, the media began to report the problem of Christian refugees living in constant fear, due to the threats and abuse they endure at the hands of some of their fellow residents in the asylum centres.

Reports include being forced to watch videos of beheadings, being barred from eating pork or using the kitchen because they were “unclean”, physical attacks, rape, and daily harassment. The following are some of the most serious examples:

An Iranian Christian who fled persecution in his country told German newspaper *Die Welt*,

“In Iran, the Revolutionary Guards arrested my brother in a house church. I fled the Iranian intelligence because I thought in Germany I can finally live freely according to my religion. But I cannot openly admit that I am a Christian in my home for asylum seekers. I would be threatened.”¹⁶ He lives in a camp for asylum seekers in southern Brandenburg near the border with Saxony. “They wake me before dawn during Ramadan and say I should eat before the sun comes up. If I refuse, they say I’m a kuffar, an unbeliever. They spit at me... They treat me like an animal. And threaten to kill me,” he told *Die Welt* in September 2015.¹⁷

In late 2015, a Christian man from Iran fled an asylum centre to Pastor Gottfried Martens’ church near Berlin. He had a 30-centimetre-long wound on his back and reported that while asleep, a man entered his room and slashed his back with a knife and destroyed his Bible.¹⁸

In December 2015, Hamburg police arrested 23-year-old Afghan asylum seeker Mohebola A. He is accused of attacking and seriously injuring a 24-year-old Iranian Christian, Amir H., with a baton in October in a shelter. A few days before the attack, Amir apparently told the Afghan man that he had converted from Islam to Christianity.

During the attack Mohebola allegedly declared that it was not a sin to kill Amir, a convert, as he had betrayed Islam and was an unbelieving heretic, according to police who called this a religiously-motivated incident.¹⁹ According to *Die Welt*²⁰, he was left unconscious as a result of the attack. In February 2016, the Hamburg prosecutor indicted Mohebola A. for attempted homicide and serious bodily harm.²¹

This problem is not unique to Germany, however. In the Netherlands, a Pakistani Christian asylum seeker reported that he fled the centre where he had been housed because of constant harassment, being banned from using the communal kitchen because his meat is not halal, and aggressive behaviour from his Syrian Muslim roommate. The official response to his complaints was to suggest he change rooms. Pointing to the discrimination he experienced as a Christian, he said “of course I can change rooms, but what is the difference between Pakistan and the Netherlands?”²²

According to Open Doors France (*Portes Ouvertes*) on December 14, 2015, police investigated a knife attack against Christian refugees in the Grande Synthe camp in northern France resulted in several wounded victims. A 19-year-old man, Mohammed, was killed.²³

Michel Varton, director of Portes Ouvertes said, “Many Christians amongst the refugees are fleeing persecution and discrimination. They are already traumatised by their terrible experience in the Middle East. Imagine their despair to realise that, once here in France, they are suffering the same discrimination and hate from fellow immigrants.... It's totally unacceptable that someone could lose their life for their faith once in France.”²⁴

In Sweden, a Pakistani couple – Christian converts – were harassed by Muslims in the asylum centre where they were staying. In October, they fled the centre after an incident in which the husband's name was sprayed on a wall, calling for his death. They were given refuge at a local church after the Migration Board did not take steps to protect them, according to the husband.²⁵

In December, a 26-year-old Syrian, known as “N.N.,” was arrested on suspicion of beating and threatening a 16-year-old at an asylum house in Borgholm, Sweden. When arrested, he tried to hide a mobile phone on which the police later found pictures from the war in Syria, showing N.N. posing with swords and firearms. Earlier in the year, N.N. had been convicted of two counts of making death threats against a Christian asylum seeker and was sentenced to probation.²⁶

Christians Mistreated by Staff

“Skull contusion, monocular hematoma, chest trauma, blunt abdominal trauma history. Patient was beaten today by four security people. Patient was brought to the [emergency department] with a massive headache and pain in the abdomen.” These were the emergency department notes for 31-year-old Iranian “Ajdin” on a November evening in Germany. “They accused me of insulting Islam, beat me, and kicked me in the face,” said the Christian convert.²⁷

He told *Die Welt* that almost daily, he and 13 other Christians in the Oberurseler Asylum Centre (in the Frankfurt Rhein-Main region) were insulted by Muslim refugees, particularly when they went twice a week for worship with their little Bibles in their hands. “From some roommates we expected this, but that guards also despise our faith, we could have never imagined.” When he entered the refugee home that evening, his refugee card on which his nationality was showing, the guard made a strange remark: “Ahh, the Islamic Republic of Iran,” the guard

said with appreciation. To this, Ajdin – who had fled from Iran before the Islamic regime – replied: “No, just Iran.” He was followed to the dining room, where he was grabbed by another security guard and pushed into the hallway. There, several security guards beat him, as they said he had insulted Islam.²⁸

Pastor Martens has explained that many asylum centres employ Arabic-speaking security staff, which is useful for understanding the refugees who do not yet speak German.²⁹ However, he described several different examples of Christian refugees being attacked by radical Muslim security personnel and pointed to their belief in God and possession of the Bible as the flashpoints for these attacks.³⁰

At the end of November 2015, five Muslim security employees beat two refugees from Iran for having a Bible in their room. Pastor Martens said: “In German refugee camps we have a situation like in Iran. The people are here because of their [Christian] beliefs and now they live in fear”.³¹

“In German refugee camps we have a situation like in Iran. The people are here because of their [Christian] beliefs and now they live in fear.”

Pastor Gottfried Martens

Pastor Martens reported the following incident involving baptismal candidates from his church: Two refugees, Christian converts, were waiting for services at the Regional Office for Health and Social Affairs with a Christian friend. A man in the waiting area offered an empty chair to the friend saying “You are Muslim, you may sit here.” The friend responded “But I am not Muslim, I am a Christian.”

The Muslim refugees then complained to the Arabic-speaking security staff about having to wait with “impure Christians”. Security staff then attacked the Christians with insults about themselves and their faith, and told them they

were barred from the Regional Office for six months.³²

The Christians had previously waited for two months for services. Pastor Martens explained, “The Muslim security staff has gradually made the waiting area an anti-Christian zone... Those in charge know about this and are silent.”³³

In February 2016, BZ-Berlin reported that 70 radical Muslim refugees threatened six Christian asylum seekers from Iran with beatings for reading the Bible. Days later, they were forced to flee their temporary home in the former Tempelhof Airport after being told by a security employee of the accommodation that they had an hour to leave because they were troublemakers.³⁴ Outrageously, after they spoke to the press about the problems they were facing in finding housing after this incident, government officials intervened but told them not to speak to any more journalists.³⁵

Open Doors Germany’s survey made similar observations regarding the problems with mostly Muslim security staff members in refugee accommodations, and also noted that many of the respondents said that they were afraid to report incidents because they would be labelled as ‘troublemakers’.³⁶

Chapter Two

Summary of Recommendations

The Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians in Europe makes the following recommendations to relevant international, European, national, and regional authorities:

- Declare the systematic targeting and killing of Christians and other religious minorities in Iraq and Syria genocide.
- Recognise the special status of Christians and other religious minorities, and receive refugees and asylum seekers from alternate channels, instead of solely from UNHCR camps.
- Record the religious affiliation of refugees at reception centres.
- Train and educate police, social welfare office staff, and accommodation security on the topic of religiously-motivated conflict.
- Improve the balance in ethnic/religious composition of refugees, as well as staff, security, and translators in asylum centres, and remove offending staff in incidents of religiously-motivated bias or violence.
- Permit anonymous reporting of religiously-motivated incidents, protect whistle-blowers, remove perpetrators from accommodation, and deport violent offenders.
- Support private accommodations for Christians.
- As a last resort or temporary measure, in the absence of the above-mentioned protections, establish separate accommodations for Christian refugees.

Specific Recommendations

Genocide declarations and special status

The Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians in Europe urges the OSCE, United Nations, and national parliaments to take up the issue of Christian refugees, in form of genocide declarations and the recognition of a special status for Christians and other religious minorities fleeing the Middle East as refugees. Further, the Observatory urges authorities to recognize the serious peril converted Christians face in the event of deportation.

Open Doors, along with other charities, gave evidence in November 2015 to a UK Parliamentary Committee about the status of Christians in UNHCR refugee camps. There was a general consensus that some Syrian Christians are particularly vulnerable and avoid the UNHCR camps and registration process due to fear of discrimination or social restrictions. Thus, the panel recommended that relocations schemes directed at the most vulnerable should seek those living outside the UNHCR camps.³⁷

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, has warned that because Christians generally do not go to UNHCR camps, countries such as the U.K. with resettlement schemes that draw solely from those camps will unintentionally neglect vulnerable Christians.³⁸

Lord George Carey of Clifton, former archbishop of Canterbury, warned in an editorial for The Telegraph that “[The UK’s] policy [of taking refugees from UNHCR camps] inadvertently discriminates against the very Christian communities most victimised by the inhuman butchers of the so-called Islamic State.”³⁹

Similarly, Bishop Angaelos of the Coptic Orthodox Church has noted that if governments only take people from refugee camps, they may inadvertently leave out Christians, who are not in the camps. He urged officials to use networks outside the camps to ensure that Christians are found.⁴⁰

Recording of religious affiliation

Based on the clear evidence that Christian refugees are at risk in the current accommodations across Europe, the Observatory encourages the recording of religious affiliation of individuals

at initial reception centres. This will assist staff members and police to better identify religiously-motivated incidents, as well to provide appropriate re-placement when necessary.

Training and education of police and security staff on the topic of religiously-motivated conflict

Recognising that conflicts may arise between the refugees and asylum seekers accommodations, it is imperative that those working with them are aware of the issue of, and potential for, religiously-motivated bullying, threats, and violence.

“[The UK’s] policy [of taking refugees from UNHCR camps] inadvertently discriminates against the very Christian communities most victimised by the inhuman butchers of the so-called Islamic State.”

Lord Carey of Clifton,
former Archbishop of Canterbury

The Observatory urges regular training for local police, as well as employees of social welfare offices and accommodation centres on this topic.

Improving ethnic/religious balance among refugees, as well as staff, security, and translators

On March 1, 2016 the Ecumenical Council of Berlin-Brandenburg (ÖRBB), a consortium of thirty churches, wrote a letter to the Mayor of Berlin pleading for urgent help for Christian refugees, pointing to the incidents of bullying, threats, and physical violence against them at the hands of radical Muslims in the asylum centres. The letter also expressed concern about the situation at Berlin’s office for health and social affairs – *Landesamt für Gesundheit und Soziales* – (La-GeSo) and the reports of discrimination against

Christians by the Muslim security staff.⁴¹

The ÖRBB made the following recommendations: that the percentage of Christians in accommodations be increased to at least 10 per cent, to provide a sense of security and ensure a more equal footing; that emergency shelters for Christians should be provided; and that there should be a religious mix within the LaGeSo security staff.

The Observatory additionally recommends an improved balance in the ethnic and religious composition of the security staff employees and translators to help prevent bias against Christians. Given the findings of the Open Doors survey in Germany, it is clear that anti-Christian bias exists among the staff members and translators, and this puts Christian refugees at risk.

Further, we recommend that in any case of doubt about religiously-biased behaviour by staff, those persons should be removed pending investigation.

Allowing anonymous reporting of religiously-motivated incidents, protecting whistleblowers, removing perpetrators from accommodation, and deporting violent offenders

We urge authorities to establish methods for anonymous reporting by refugees, and whistleblower protections for them. In the case of any religiously-motivated violence committed by a resident of an accommodation centre, the perpetrator should be removed and asylum denied.

As was reported by Open Doors, many Christian refugees have chosen not to report incidents out of fear. Combined with the lack of protection for victims and the risk that they will be punished themselves, it is clear that these steps are essential for the safety of Christian refugees.

Supporting private accommodation

In the absence of publicly-run separate accommodation for Christian refugees who have already experienced bullying, threats, and violence at the hands of other refugees or staff members, and in the case of persons entering Europe through the work of private charities, rather than from UNHCR camps, the Observatory urges public support for private accommodations.

In September of 2015, Pope Francis appealed to every parish and religious community in Europe to take in a family of refugees. As was previously mentioned, Pastor Gottfried Martens and his church near Berlin have privately cared for nearly 1,200 Christian refugees who have fled accommodations.⁴²

Other examples of private accommodation include the following:

Sweden

In February 2016, Nuri Kino, the Swedish-Assyrian founder of “A Demand For Action”, an organisation that works for the protection of ethno-religious minorities in the Middle East, has proposed opening an asylum centre for Christian refugees in Sweden.⁴³ After his organisation received numerous reports of harassment and threats against Christians by Muslims in asylum centres, he wrote to the Swedish Migration Board that he intended to open a centre for Christians. In response, Swedish Migration Board said that it does not support accommodations that divide people on the basis of gender, ethnicity, race or religion, but that those interested in opening and operating shelters were welcome to submit a bid.⁴⁴

The Swedish Migration Service’s press office told the newspaper *Världen idag* that its policy was for mixed accommodations not separated on the basis of religion or ethnicity, that there are no plans to change this, and that people are placed where there is space. Further, that anyone can open accommodations for asylum seekers, but in order to receive funding, there must be an agreement with the Migration Board.⁴⁵ Kino responded that he would sue the Board, if necessary, to receive funding for a centre to protect Christians.

He referred to the Swedish anti-discrimination law to “combat discrimination and promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of sex, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age.” Pointing out that the Board has opened centres to protect LGBT refugees, he wants to make sure that asylum seekers who are persecuted because of their religion are treated in the same way as asylum seekers who are persecuted for their sexuality.⁴⁶

The Swedish Evangelical Alliance launched “The Christian Asylum and Safety Fund” in order to financially support Kino’s initiative to open a temporary private asylum accommodation for Christians and others who are threatened.⁴⁷

Poland

In July 2015, U.K. Christian aid charity Barnabas Fund's "Operations Safe Havens", in conjunction with other charitable organisations, evacuated over 50 Syrian Christian families to Warsaw. The families travelled from Damascus to Beirut. A specially chartered flight took them onto Warsaw. The charity is paying for their basic needs for one year, while Polish churches welcome them, and help them to find accommodation and jobs.⁴⁸

Czech Republic

Similarly, Czech charity, Foundation Generation 21, and Barnabas Fund collaborated to fund flights, and first year costs of accommodation and subsistence in the Czech Republic for 37 Christian families fleeing Iraq. The groups will move to the Czech Republic in four groups from January to April 2016 and will first be housed in a refugee facility in the Czech Republic and receive support and language lessons. They will then move into the community where they will also gain help from church networks. As of February 2016, the second of four groups had arrived in Prague.⁴⁹

Slovakia

In December 2015, a privately chartered Airbus brought 149 internally displaced Iraqi Christians (IDPs) to Slovakia, where they had been formally approved for resettlement. Slovakia accepted the displaced Iraqi Christians as the result of tireless efforts by Nina Shea, the director of the Center for Religious Freedom at the Hudson Institute, and members of a small team of U.S. religious-freedom advocates. Father Douglas Bazi, a former hostage of Islamic jihadists, had approached Shea for help earlier in the summer. The rest of the world generally ignores IDPs because they did not flee outside their country of Iraq, they are not "refugees" and thus not recognized by the United States or United Nations.⁵⁰

Establishing separate accommodation

Finally, the Observatory recommends the establishment of separate accommodation for Christian refugees as either a temporary solution or as a last resort. Similar support for separate accommodation has come in the last year from a number of experts on the situation for refugees. In September 2015, Jörg Radek, deputy head of Germany's police union said "I think housing separated according to religion makes perfect

sense," particularly for Muslims and Christians.⁵¹

Since then, police unions across Germany have recommended separate accommodations for Muslims and Christian refugees. The chairman of the German Police Union (DPolG), Rainer Wendt, told the Passauer Neue Presse that violence by Muslim asylum seekers against Christians was "not a new development" and Christians should therefore be put "under special protection" of the police.⁵²

In February 2016, the national bishop of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK) in Germany, Rev. Dr. Hans-Jörg Voigt, responded to reports of radical Muslim attacks against Christians by demanding at least temporary separate accommodations for Christians. "Religious freedom is a constitutionally protected right, comparable to freedom of the press," Bishop Voigt said. "The state has the obligation and duty to permit, ensure, and protect freedom of religion." He added, "It must not be permitted that Christians are oppressed in refugee shelters because of their faith."⁵³

"There has to be cultural, ethnic and religious segregation in the [refugee] lodging," says Paulus Kurt of ZOCD. Although this is not an easy task for the federal government, "welcoming culture alone is not enough."⁵⁴

Kurt, who fled as a Christian from Turkey himself in 1980, explained that his organization has a telephone hotline for Christians having problems in their accommodations. "On average five persons a day are calling: Syrians, Iraqis, Armenians, Ethiopians, and in the last months increasingly Eritreans."

He advocates for separate accommodations for Christians and Muslims and has received requests for this from several cities, but most government agencies have refused. Stefan Spatz, head of the Social Welfare Office in Stuttgart, has opposed separate centres saying that the accommodations are something like the United Nations in miniature and people need to learn to at least get along.⁵⁵

Roman Catholic philosopher Robert Spaemann says it is cynical to tell them to "get along," noting that Christians would have liked to, but the Muslims who set the tone in the lodging, are not interested.⁵⁶

Despite the repeated assaults and harassment against Christian refugees in the German capital of Berlin, there have been no public plans for separate accommodation. After meeting with

Christian refugees from Syria, Berlin Archbishop Heiner Hoch called for greater protection of Christian refugees at the federal level, but stressed that a quota system for accommodating them would not solve the fundamental problems.⁵⁷

Ulrike Kostka, director of the Berlin office of Caritas, an international Catholic relief organization, has stressed that there can be no favouritism of one religious group over another, but noted that if people cannot sleep because they are afraid of being persecuted because of their religion, then something is wrong in Germany.⁵⁸

“Concern is growing that politicians and the authorities might not be taking such threats seriously enough. Christian persecution is not a topic of bygone ages.”

Cardinal Woelki of Cologne

There has been criticism of Archbishop Hoch and Caritas director Kostka for their support for a centre for homosexual refugees, without providing similar support for separate housing for Christians.⁵⁹ In February 2016, a shelter for homosexual refugees opened in Berlin, the project of a gay rights group and the city council. It can accommodate over 120 people.⁶⁰ No such shelter exists for Christian refugees in Berlin, and it is reported that Pastor Gottfried Martens and his church have privately cared for nearly 1,200 Christian refugees who have fled accommodations.⁶¹

In March 2016, Dr. Andreas Thiermeyer, refugee officer for the Eichstätt diocese, praised Cardinal Woelki of Cologne for advocating separate accommodations for Christian refugees.⁶² Cardinal Woelki warned at an ecumenical service in February, “Concern is growing that politicians and the authorities might not be taking such threats seriously enough. Christian persecution is not a topic of bygone ages.”⁶³

Due to frequent reports of abuse, harassment,

and assaults against Christian refugees at the hands of radical Muslim migrants, the city of Stuttgart approved new, separate, accommodations in February 2016. Although the city initially opposed separating asylum-seekers on religious or ethnic lines, it finally agreed to provide new accommodation for Christians after a public outcry, lobbying by Evangelischer Arbeitskreis (EAK), a Protestant working group of the CDU, and an on-line petition signed by nearly 17,000 people.

According to *Die Welt*, Stefan Walter from the EAK said, “The Christian refugees come from countries where the persecution of Christians is the greatest. Christian refugees should not be used for an integration experiment.” Thirty Christian refugees should be able to move in May 2016.⁶⁴

In other areas of Germany, the eastern state of Thuringia houses refugees separately based on their country of origin, but does not separate them by religion. “‘Intensely religious’ Muslims above all must learn to live with other religions”, Migration Minister Dieter Lauinger said. Bavaria takes into account ethnic background and religion. “Bavaria won’t condone attacks on asylum-seekers, and that includes conflicts among the refugees,” said Emilia Müller, the state’s Minister for Social Affairs.⁶⁵

In March 2016, the Catholic Bishops in Bavaria announced they wanted to be more involved with Christians of different denominations who come to Germany as refugees from the Middle East and from Africa. Worship spaces should be provided and local foundations should be supported. Munich Cardinal Reinhard Marx also referred the task of ensuring that Christian refugees in Germany do not fall into new difficulties.⁶⁶

In the Netherlands, politicians agreed in late February 2015 to establish separate housing for both Christian refugees as well as LGBT refugees as a result of increasing number of cases involving violence and threats against them.⁶⁷ The Swedish Migration Board, however, does not support accommodations that divide people on the basis of gender, ethnicity, race or religion.⁶⁸

The current situation for Christian refugees in many centres across Europe is simply intolerable. In the short term, until the previously-mentioned recommendations are implemented, separate accommodation must be considered.

PART TWO:

**INCIDENTS OF
INTOLERANCE & DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST CHRISTIANS
IN EUROPE
IN 2015**



We present the following incidents of intolerance and discrimination chronologically, providing a short summary of the facts. The links below each case lead to the Observatory's website offering detailed information about the incident.

January 2015

CROATIA

Conscientious Objection at Stake After Five Public Hospitals Refuse to Perform Abortions

The Ministry of Health in Croatia vowed that every public hospital will have a medical team that performs abortions, regardless of doctors' conscientious objections. This policy was announced after the discovery of five hospitals where gynaecologists invoked their rights to conscientious objection and refused to perform abortions.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/conscientious-objection-at-stake-after-five-public-hospitals-refuse-to-perform-abortion.html>

GERMANY

Politician Forced to Withdraw Candidacy Due to Involvement with Christian Causes

Politician Mark Holleman had to withdraw his candidacy for appointment as the environmental and health officer for Munich, despite being the favoured candidate of the City Council, after public claims that his membership in a pro-life group as well as in Christian Solidarity International made him "too radical".

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/politician-forced-to-withdraw-candidacy-due-to-christian-engagement.html>

GERMANY

Devastation of Evangelical Church in Plauen

The entire interior of Johanniskirche (St. John's Church) in Plauen (Saxony) was sprayed with fire extinguisher powder in what the pastor called an intentional act of vandalism. Damages were estimated at 10,000 euros.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/devastation-of-st-john-s-church-in-plauen-saxony.html>

GERMANY

Parents Protesting Aggressive Sex Education Attacked by Counter-Demonstration in Hamburg

150 parents demonstrating against violations of their rights to direct the education of their children were attacked by approximately 600 left-wing counter-demonstrators who threw eggs, fireworks and bottles at them. A 15 year-old girl had to be taken to the hospital.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/parents-protesting-against-aggressive-sex-education-attacked-by-counter-demonstration-in-hamburg.html>

GERMANY

Vandalism in Miesenbacher Chapel

The Daily "Traunsteiner Tagblatt" reported an incident of vandalism in the Miesenbacher Kapelle in Ruhpolding. Vandals threw blessed liturgical candles and struck a statue of the Virgin Mary with a statue of the baby Jesus, breaking the hands of the Jesus figure.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/vandalism-in-miesenbacher-chapel-in-ruhpolding.html>

FRANCE

Desecration of Tabernacle in Chapel in Barbizon

Vandals broke open the door of the tabernacle, where the consecrated wine and host are kept. Both religious items, which carry significant meaning for Catholics, were thrown on the ground. Nothing was stolen.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/desecration-of-tabernacle-in-chapel-in-barbizon.html>

CROATIA

Journalists' Association Displays Anti-Christian Bias

A Croatian journalist's professional association reprimanded her for calling abortion 'murder' in an online article. While anti-Christian expressions are generally accepted as "a matter of style", her Christian-inspired opinion was not tolerated.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/journalists-association-displays-anti-christian-bias.html>

FRANCE

Desecration and Theft of the Church Notre-Dame-des-Marais in Montluel

Unknown perpetrators forced open the tabernacle door and stole a chalice and consecrated hosts. The following Sunday morning Mass had to be moved to the neighbouring town of Dagneux and the church remained closed for five days.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/desecration-and-theft-of-the-church-notre-dame-des-marais-in-montluel.html>

GERMANY

Ad For Mountain Tourism Conceals Summit Cross

Since 1851, there has been a tall cross at the summit of the mountain "Zugspitze". Due to increased tourism from Middle Eastern countries, the management of the Zugspitze Railway produced an advertising leaflet for the mountain in which the famous summit cross does not appear in any photographs.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/ad-for-mountain-tourism-conceals-summit-cross.html>

FRANCE

Calvary Scene Statues Vandalised in Cabourg

Life-sized statues of the Virgin Mary and St. John in a Calvary scene behind a church in Cabourg were toppled and found lying on the ground.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/lifesize-calvary-scene-statues-overthrown-in-cabourg.html>

ITALY

Radical Muslim Devastated the Church of Santa Maria Assunta in Cles/Trento

A Moroccan-born Muslim yelled phrases from the Koran in Arabic as he entered the church. He destroyed five religious statues and other religious objects in the church, causing severe damage. The 67-year-old male was arrested by the police.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/muslim-devastated-the-church-of-santa-maria-assunta-in-clestrento.html>

ITALY

Profanation and Devastation of Statue of Mary in Perugia

A group of men vandalized a public statue of the Virgin Mary. According to the parish priest, "They broke the statue in two pieces, and they then kicked it as if it was a ball. Afterwards they urinated onto the pieces."

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/profanation-and-devastation-of-statue-of-mary-in-perugia.html>

February 2015

GERMANY

Aggression against Pro-Life Activists in Munich

The German Christian pro-life group Jugend für das Leben ("Youth for Life") organized a demonstration on the Odeon Square in Munich. Between 50 to 70 police officers were deployed to protect the pro-life group, including a considerable number of small children, from physical attacks by counter-demonstrators.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/aggression-against-pro-life-activists-in-munich.html>

GERMANY

Bremen Cathedral Target in Plans for Islamist Attack

Four radical Islamists from France attempted to commit terrorist attacks in Bremen in the Cathedral of St Peter, a Gothic cathedral adjacent to the town hall, in a synagogue, and on a lively square. A massive deployment of police thwarted their plans, but the would-be attackers escaped.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/bremen-cathedral-target-in-plans-for-islamist-attack.html>

FRANCE

Vandalism of Two Churches on the Same Day in Joigny

The City of Joigny and Fr. Romain Tavernier, a parish priest, submitted two complaints for acts of vandalism and theft which had taken place in two churches of Joigny on the same day.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/vandalism-of-two-churches-on-the-same-day-in-joigny.html>

FRANCE

Christian Graves Desecrated in Matoury (French Guiana)

Eight graves in the cemetery of Matoury, French Guiana were intentionally vandalized, with their crucifixes were stolen or damaged. "Alcohol and pieces of chicken bones were found at the scene, which may suggest esoteric rites," according to officials.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/christian-graves-desecrated-in-matoury-french-guiana.html>

POLAND

Profanation of a Church in Czestochowa

Unknown perpetrators vandalised the church of the Mystery of the Resurrection in Emmaus in Czestochowa by spray-painting satanic signs and phrases on the facade of the church.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/profanation-of-a-church-in-czestochowa.html>

FRANCE

French Media Misleadingly Calls Christian Cemeteries "Municipal Sites"

The French news channel BFMTV reported statistics about problem of the profanation of cemeteries in 2014. In its morning news, it reported that 206 cases were in Christian cemeteries, in Jewish cemeteries there were 6 cases, and in Muslim sites there were 4 cases. By its lunchtime news program, the channel had ceased to mention "Christian" cemeteries, instead, the phrase "municipal" cemeteries was used. References to Jewish and Muslim cemeteries were unchanged.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/french-media-misleadingly-calls-christian-cemeteries-municipal-sites.html>

FRANCE

Statue of Virgin Mary Desecrated in Châtel

Vandals attacked the statue of Our Lady of Skieurs in front of a church in the resort of Châtel in Haute-Savoie. The perpetrators broke both hands off the statue of Mary and threw them into the cemetery.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/a-statue-of-the-virgin-mary-desecrated-in-chatel.html>

SWITZERLAND

Church in Delémont Soiled by Offensive Graffiti

The interior and exterior of the Catholic church of Saint-Marcel Delémont was vandalised with offensive graffiti, including "Jesus is gay", "Your religion is not mine," as well as satanic symbols.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/church-in-delemont-soiled-by-offensive-graffiti.html>

FRANCE

Dozens of Graves Vandalized in Calvados

Unknown perpetrators vandalized dozens of crucifixes on graves and displaced them in the cemetery of the town of Tracy-sur-Mer in Calvados.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/dozens-of-christian-graves-vandalized-in-calvados.html>

FRANCE

French President Condemns the Murder of Christians without Referring to Their Faith

In his statement after the murder of 21 Coptic Christians by Daesh in Libya, President Hollande did not use the word “Christian” or that the people were killed for their Christian faith at all; he merely referred to the victims as “Egyptian citizens.”

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/french-president-condemns-the-murder-of-christians-without-referring-to-their-faith.html>

FRANCE

Series of Desecration and Thefts at Churches

Five French churches were the victims of theft, vandalism and desecration within three days at the hands of unknown perpetrators. In the church of Saint-Maurice of the parish of Neuville-Dames, an act of desecration and theft took place: The unknown perpetrators vandalised and broke the tabernacle and stole the ciborium. On the same day, in the parish of Ambronay, a ciborium was stolen from Notre Dame church. In Vonna, a thief stole two chalices from St. Martin Church. In Jujurieux Pont d'Ain, parishioners discovered that a ciborium from Saint-Etienne church was stolen. Another incident took place in Montluel, where the local priest discovered that the ciborium and the hosts of Notre-Dames-Marais were stolen. These incidents came after a series of other thefts, desecration and degradation that had occurred in recent months in many churches in France. Vandalism occurred in the churches of Seyssel, of Saint-Jean-de-Niost, of Sainte-Julie, of Saint-Etienne-du-Bois, and of Saint-Maurice-de-Beynost, amongst others.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/series-of-desecration-and-thefts-at-churches.html>

FRANCE

Graves Devastated in Severan

Twenty graves were vandalized in the downtown cemetery of Severan. The unknown perpetrators were exceptionally vicious toward Christian symbols that adorned the graves.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/graves-devastated-in-severan.html>

FRANCE

After Repeated Acts of Vandalism Bishop Orders Removal of the Eucharist

In a response to the repeated, severe acts of vandalism which had taken place in ten French parishes over several weeks, the bishop of Bellay-Ars ordered that the Eucharist be removed from all parishes and chapels of his diocese.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/after-numerous-acts-of-vandalism-bishop-orders-removal-of-the-eucharist.html>

ITALY

St. John the Baptist Church in Lecce Vandalized with Offensive Graffiti

A statue of the Virgin Mary was spray-painted along with graffiti saying “God is a transgender” and “priests are paedophiles”. Other graffiti said the attack were in response to a pro-family conference organized the previous week by “Alleanza Cattolica” and “Si alla famiglia”.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/st-john-the-baptist-church-in-lecce-vandalized-with-offensive-graffiti.html>

GERMANY

Statues in Church in Friedrichshafen Severely Vandalized

A church was vandalized and desecrated in Friedrichshafen in Baden-Württemberg, shocking the Catholic community of St. Peter Canisius of the diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/statues-in-church-in-friedrichshafen-severely-vandalized.html>

SWEDEN

Abortion Opponents Compared to Jihadists

Mona Sahlin, national coordinator against violent extremism at Sweden's Ministry of Justice, during a panel discussion on religion and democracy, called Ellinor Grimmark, a Christian midwife who refuses to perform abortions, an “extreme religious practitioner who is fighting in a similar way as do the people fighting for the Islamic state.”

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/abortion-opponents-compared-to-jihadists.html>

GERMANY

Student Beaten in Dormitory for Christian Faith in Berlin

According to the police, a 24-year-old student was first verbally insulted and then severely beaten by two attackers on his way to his student dormitory, solely “because of his Christian faith.” During the assault, the offenders put a knife to the student’s throat. Security staff intervened, but the two perpetrators escaped by car.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/student-beaten-in-dormitory-for-christian-faith-in-berlin.html>

GERMANY

Arson of Protestant Church in Plauen / Saxony

In Stockheim, in the diocese of Augsburg, an arson attack took place in Protestant St. Michael’s church. The sexton of the church, who discovered the fire, managed to extinguish the fire in the altar area. But despite his efforts, the fire spread to the rest of the church.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/arson-of-protestant-church-in-plauen-saxony.html>

March 2015

UNITED KINGDOM

Employment Tribunal Hears Christian Educator “Rightly” Dismissed for Faith

Christian nursery teacher, Sarah Mbuyi, was dismissed from her job for “gross misconduct” for saying that marriage is an institution between one man and one woman in a private conversation with a colleague. In an employment tribunal hearing, witnesses testified that Christian views on marriage should not be expressed in the workplace.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/hearing-confirms-christian-educator-rightly-dismissed-for-faith-in-london.html>

FRANCE

Vandalism in the Church of Saint-Élisabeth in Paris

Unknown perpetrators committed acts of vandalism and degradation on a work of art behind the choir at the foot of the Cross in the church of Sainte-Élisabeth-de-Hongrie in Paris.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/degrading-vandalism-in-st-elizabeth-church-in-paris.html>

FRANCE

Replica of the Lourdes Grotto Vandalized in Delme, Moselle

Several acts of vandalism targeted the Lourdes Grotto near the cemetery in Delme. A witness said that benches in front of the cave were destroyed.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/replica-of-the-lourdes-grotto-vandalized-in-delme-moselle.html>

SPAIN

Damages to Religious Symbols in Madrid Cemetery

The cemetery of Brunete in Madrid was vandalized during the night of March 30th. Tombs, crucifixes, and other religious symbols were either destroyed or damaged. Graffiti was found, which said: “PP (the Popular Party) is a son of a bitch,” The conservative PP is considered by many to be associated with Christianity.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/damages-to-religious-symbols-in-cemetery-of-brunete-madrid.html>

UNITED KINGDOM

Street Preacher Fined, Judge Rules on Appropriateness of Bible Verses in Public

Taunton street preacher Mike Overd has been convicted of a Public Order offence for using a Bible verse condemning homosexuality in a conversation with a homosexual man. The judge ruled that a different Bible verse would have been more appropriate and would have allowed him to avoid the fine.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/street-preacher-fined-judge-rules-on-appropriateness-of-bible-verses-in-public.html>

ITALY

Blasphemous and Offensive Performance in Bologna

During an event in Bologna, organized by the LGBT organization “Circolo Arcigay”, participants took part in obscene and sexually vulgar scenes depicting the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The city authorities demanded the stop to the events, which were described as “blasphemous and offensive to the dignity of the Christians.”

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/blasphemous-and-offensive-heretical-and-superstitious-night-in-bologna.html>

GERMANY

“Congress of Christian Leaders” Called “Congress of Radical Christians” in News Coverage

Known for his bias against Christians, Christian Baars, reporter for NRD.de, published an article about a Christian Congress that took place in February 2015 in Hamburg. “Scholz unterstützt Kongress radikaler Christen” (in English, “Scholz supports Congress of Radical Christians”) is the title of the article. Olaf Scholz is the First Mayor of Hamburg.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/congress-of-christian-leaders-called-congress-of-radical-christians-in-news-coverage.html>

UNITED KINGDOM

“Christ” and “Jesus” Considered Abusive by Marks & Spencer

A pastor’s wife’s online order for a bouquet of flowers was blocked when she tried to use words: “Thank you for your care and practical help for Margaret in her last days...With love from her church family, Christ Church Teddington.” She was confronted with an on-screen warning: “Sorry there’s something in your message we can’t write.”

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/christ-and-jesus-considered-abusive-by-marks-amp-spencer.html>

SWITZERLAND

Church Vandalized in Pregny-Chambésy

Several statues in the St. Petronilla Catholic Church in Pregny-Chambésy were profaned and damaged by unknown vandals.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/church-vandalized-in-pregny-chambesy.html>

FRANCE

Catholics Insulted by Demonstrators After Mass

As they left the church in Saint-Epvre in Nancy after Sunday services, parishioners were confronted with a feminist demonstration in front of the steps of the church. The activists were shouting hate slogans and vulgarities towards the people leaving the church, including young children.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/catholics-insulted-by-demonstrators-after-mass.html>

April 2015

ITALY

Islamic Terrorists Planned Suicide Bombings at St. Peter’s Square

A Sardinia-based terrorist ring had been planning an attack against the Vatican since 2010, involving two suicide bombings at St. Peter’s Square. The network supported itself through illegal migrant trafficking. False work contracts helped facilitate asylum for Pakistani and Afghanistan men posing as migrants. Fake customs declarations and flawed money transactions partly financed the activities. Italian counter-terrorism operatives issued arrest warrants for 18 men and arrested nine of them across Italy.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/islamic-terrorists-planned-suicide-bombings-at-st-peter-s-square.html>

FRANCE

Attack on Churches Foiled

French police arrested an Algerian Muslim man suspected of planning an attack on “one or two churches” near Paris. According to the Paris prosecutor, documents linked to al-Qaeda and Islamic State were found at his apartment and a contact in Syria had advised him to target churches.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/attack-on-churches-foiled.html>

AUSTRIA

Play Equates John the Baptist with Islamic Terrorists

The regional theatre of Graz premiered its version of “Salome” in which John the Baptist is a radical fundamentalist. It claims that there is essentially no difference between him and Islamic State terrorists.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/play-equates-john-the-baptist-with-islamic-terrorists.html>

POLAND

Tomb Desecration during Easter in Łębork

During Easter weekend, unknown perpetrators profaned several corpses buried in tombs in the church yard in Łębork in the district of Pomerania.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/tomb-desecration-during-easter-in-l-bork.html>

VATICAN CITY

Hacker Attacks Vatican Website

Twice in one week, the Vatican website was partly inaccessible due to attacks from hackers. On Twitter someone named “Turk Hack Team Herakles” claimed responsibility, saying he would continue until the pope apologized for referring to a Turkish genocide against Armenians 100 years ago.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/hacker-attacks-vatican-website.html>

ITALY

12 Christians Killed by Muslim Migrants

Italian police reported that 15 Muslim migrants were arrested after they threw 12 Christians overboard on a boat in the Mediterranean Sea on the way to Italy. Migrants from Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Mali, and Guinea were arrested in the Sicilian city of Palermo and charged with multiple counts of aggravated murder, motivated by religious hate.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/12-christians-killed-by-muslims.html>

May 2015

UNITED KINGDOM

Baker Found Guilty After Refusing to Bake Cake Supporting Same-Sex Marriage

A bakery in Northern Ireland was found guilty of discrimination after its Christian owner declined to provide a decorated cake with the words ‘support gay marriage’.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/baker-found-guilty-after-refusing-to-bake-cake-supporting-same-sex-marriage.html>

GERMANY

Arson in the Lutheran Church of Altena

A fire caused thousands of euros in damage in the Lutheran Church in Altena in North Rhine-Westphalia.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/arson-in-the-lutheran-church-of-altena.html>

ITALY

Disruption, Threats, and Insults at a Catholic Procession

A group of radical Islamists disrupted a Catholic procession in the Italian municipality of Conselice held in honour of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/disruption-threats-and-insults-at-a-catholic-procession.html>

ITALY

Silent National Christian-Inspired Protest Mocked By Opponents

On 24th of May 2015, an Italian group called Sentinelle in piedi (“Standing Watchmen”) organized a protest against the proposed draft laws on “homophobia” and same-sex unions and expressed their dissenting views by standing for an hour in silence at over 100 public squares all over Italy. Opponents used offensive slogans and provocative gestures, including simulating homosexual acts. The participants of the Sentinelle in piedi were partly hindered by the protests.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/silent-national-christian-inspired-protest-mocked-by-opponents.html>

GERMANY

Figure of Jesus Christ destroyed by Turkish Muslim

A Turkish Muslim armed with a kitchen knife destroyed the figure of Jesus Christ located on the Sendlinger Tor in Munich.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/figure-of-jesus-christ-destroyed-by-turkish-muslim.html>

GERMANY

Burglary in St. Apostles at Neumarkt in Cologne

An unknown perpetrator broke into the church of St. Apostles in Cologne on May 12th, and stole figures of Jesus Christ from the cloister. The thief caused thousands of euros in damages, in addition to offending the religious faithful.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/burglary-in-st-apostles-at-neumarkt-in-cologne.html>

FRANCE

Vandalism Spree Against Chapels on the Island of La Reunion

Several chapels and other places of worship on the island of La Reunion were desecrated with satanic slogans and red Stars of David.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/vandalism-spree-against-chapels-on-the-island-of-la-reunion.html>

FRANCE

Judge Orders French Town to Remove Statue of John Paul II

Authorities of the small town of Ploermal were ordered to remove a statue of St. John Paul II due to the “ostentatious character” of the monument.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/judge-ordered-french-municipality-to-remove-the-statue-of-saint-john-paul-ii.html>

IRELAND

Attack at Marriage Referendum Event Causes Life-Threatening Allergic Reaction

A 10-year-old girl suffered a severe allergic reaction after an egg attack at a “No-Campaign” event in Meath. “Yes-Campaigners” threw objects, including eggs, at people expressing opposition to same-sex marriage. A “No-Campaign” leader said the atmosphere created was “toxic”.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/attack-at-marriage-referendum-event-causes-life-threatening-allergic-reaction.html>

IRELAND

Pro-Marriage Posters Removed

Mothers and Fathers Matter, a group that urged people to vote “No” in May’s gay marriage referendum in Ireland, said there was a campaign of harassment and intimidation from those on the “Yes” side. Posters were removed in Dublin and elsewhere. These acts were celebrated as “bravery” on social media.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/pro-marriage-posters-removed.html>

June 2015

FRANCE

Santeuil Church Vandalised with Faeces in Eure-Et-Loir

The Santeuil church was vandalised by unknown perpetrators who broke into each room of the church, destroyed doors, statues and the belfry. Additionally, they soiled the church with faeces.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/santeuil-church-vandalised-and-soiled-with-faeces-in-eure-et-loir.html>

FRANCE

Arson in the Church of St. Chrysole in Comines

The doors of the church of St. Chrysole in Comines were burned as a result of the arson. Due to the quick reaction of police and firefighters, the fire did not reach the interior of the church.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/arson-in-the-church-of-st-chrysole-in-comines.html>

FRANCE

The Chapel of Sainte-Bathilde Devastated in Seine-et-Marne

Vandals destroyed statues in the garden behind a shrine at the Sainte-Bathilde Chapel. Flammable liquid was found on the statue of St. Bathilde and a statue of St. Therese was broken into pieces.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/the-chapel-of-sainte-bathilde-damaged-in-seine-et-marne.html>

July 2015

UNITED KINGDOM

Schools Watchdog Ignores Bullying of Christian Students

The Christian Institute said that Ofsted and the Department for Education (DfE) have both given “inadequate attention” to the “bullying of Christian pupils”.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/uk-schools-watchdog-ignores-bullying-of-christian-students.html>

UKRAINE

Two Orthodox Religious Murdered in Ukraine

A priest and a nun, both members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, were murdered within days of each other in the Ukraine.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/two-orthodox-religious-murdered-in-ukraine.html>

August 2015

ALBANIA

Orthodox Church Destroyed by the Albanian Authorities

Despite the protests of the faithful, local officials destroyed St. Athanasius, an Orthodox church located in the village of Dhermi in southern Albania.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/orthodox-church-destroyed-by-the-albanian-authorities.html>

FRANCE

Chapel Vandalized in Nantes

Unknown perpetrators spray-painted the outside wall of a chapel of Christ Roi in Nantes.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/chapel-vandalized-in-nantes-france.html>

FRANCE

Broken and Desecrated Statue of the Virgin Mary in Reunion

A statue of the Virgin Mary next to the chapel Notre-Dame-de-la-Paix was intentionally destroyed: its chest impaled on a spit, and the other pieces of the broken statue were left in a plastic bag on the side of a road.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/broken-and-desecrated-statue-of-the-virgin-mary-in-reunion-france.html>

AUSTRIA

Kindergarten Teacher Fired for Explaining Christmas Story

A public kindergarten in Vienna fired a teacher because she “violated the kindergarten’s neutral stance on religion” by explaining that on Christmas, Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/kindergarten-teacher-fired-for-explaining-christmas-story.html>

FRANCE

Attempted Arson in Chapel Saint-François of Rennes

The chapel Saint-François of Rennes was the victim of an attempted arson during night between August 13 and 14th. Chapel Saint-François, in which the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest celebrates the Mass, is regularly the target of attacks, and even during the Mass, individuals often interrupt sacred rituals with blasphemous or insulting slogans and by threatening the priest.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/attempted-arson-in-chapel-saint-francois-of-rennes.html>

FRANCE

Haute-Loire Churches Hit with Burglaries

A burglary was committed in the sacristy of the church Sainte-Foy de Bains. The criminals stole sacred objects, including a chalice and a ciborium.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/haute-loire-churches-hit-with-burglaries.html>

SWEDEN

Anti-Christian Hate Crimes on the Rise in Sweden

According to a report released in August by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, the sharpest rise in hate crimes was seen among crimes with 'Christianophobic' motives, which have tripled in the past five years.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/anti-christian-hate-crimes-on-the-rise-in-sweden.html>

FRANCE

Desecration in Gex and Colloges Churches in Pays de l'Ain France

On Sunday, August 16, 2015, a ciborium containing consecrated Hosts and a chalice were stolen from a church in Gex. That same day, several other sacred objects registered in the inventory of Historical Monuments, were stolen from a church in Collonges.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/desecration-in-gex-and-colloges-churches-in-pays-de-l-ain-france.html>

BELGIUM

Chapel Vandalized in Walloon Brabant

During the first week of August, the small chapel Notre-Dame de Walcourt, which had been restored for free a few years ago by a volunteer, was vandalized with spray paint. The tag represented a person giving "the finger" to what appears to be a crown.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/chapel-vandalized-in-walloon-brabant.html>

FRANCE

Forty Christian Tombs Desecrated in French Cemetery

On August 3rd, local policemen found that forty graves had been desecrated in a cemetery in the town of Labry, in northeastern France. Thirty-five funeral ornaments, mostly crucifixes and plaques were displaced, and four were broken.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/40-christian-tombs-desecrated-in-french-cemetery.html>

September 2015

GERMANY

Counter-Demonstrators Attempt to Block Berlin's March for Life

More than 7,000 pro-life demonstrators took part in the March for Life 2015 in Berlin. About 300 of a total of 1,500 counter-demonstrators attempted to block the march. As many as 1,000 police officers were in force. Some of the counter-demonstrators tried to break through the police lines protecting the marchers. The officers were only able to stop them through the use of tear gas. At the same time at a different location along the march route, several hundred other counter-demonstrators held a "sit-in" and were carried away. The interference was described as a repeated "game of cat and mouse".

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/counter-demonstrators-attempt-to-block-berlins-march-for-life.htm>

GERMANY

Islamists Threaten Christians in Refugee Camps

Christian refugees in German asylum centres live in constant fear, as the Sunni majority within the migrant population attempts to enforce Sharia law. The situation is so bad that Christians claim they live like “prisoners” in Germany, and some have even returned to Middle East.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/islamists-threaten-christians-in-german-refugee-camps.html>

SWEDEN

Sunni Muslim Threatens to Kill Christian Syrian in Kalmar Accommodation

Police arrested a 26-year-old, who claimed to have fought with jihadist groups in Syria, after he threatened to “slaughter” and “cut the throat” of a Christian refugee. The victim, Amir, is frightened because the perpetrator, known as “N.N.”, was ultimately sentenced only to probation and a monetary fine. “I have fled the war to avoid this kind of thing,” he said.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/sunni-muslim-threatens-to-kill-christian-syrian-in-kalmar-accommodation.html>

FRANCE

All Sacred Objects Stolen from Chapel

A small chapel in Le Brethon was robbed of all of its sacred objects during the third week of September. The few sacred objects it housed were taken, namely, a processional cross, statuettes, votive offerings and all of the crosses.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/all-sacred-objects-stolen-from-french-chapel.html>

FRANCE

Landes Church Desecrated

In the afternoon of September 19, the church of Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul d’Habas was badly vandalized. Various liturgical objects were desecrated: the altar was stained with food, crosses inverted, and missals torn.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/french-church-desecrated.html>

FRANCE

Sangatte Church the Victim of Repeated Vandalism

On September 16th, a volunteer returned to L’église Saint-Martin to close the doors for the evening and discovered smoke emerging from the church. She also noticed broken candles littering the ground and that small decorations were taken down. Thick smoke surrounded the altar of wood and marble, and it was apparent that the small fire could have easily spread to the wooden furniture and carpets, completely destroying the church. Last December, the church was broken into, the door completely destroyed, and an ancient statue of the Virgin Mary, a precious gold chalice, antique chandeliers and the marble tabernacle were stolen.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/french-church-is-victim-of-vandalism-again.html>

FRANCE

Forty-Three Graves in French Village Damaged and Vandalized

On September 3rd, the destruction of forty-three graves was discovered in the small French village of Montjavoult. Swastikas were spray-painted on six of them and crosses were broken off and left on the ground.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/43-graves-in-french-village-damaged-and-vandalized.html>

GERMANY

Bremen Church the Victim of Burglary, Desecration and Vandalism

Unknown perpetrators broke into the St. Pius Church and stole the tabernacle containing consecrated Hosts, offertory boxes, and sprayed fire extinguishing powder all over the inside of the church.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/bremen-church-the-victim-of-burglary-desecration-and-vandalism.html>

UNITED KINGDOM

Vandals Urinate in Holy Water

Vandals broke into a Sunderland church, smashed a window (causing more than £1,000 in damage) and used fire extinguishers to try to break down doors. Although nothing was stolen, one of them urinated in the holy water font.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/uk-burglars-urinate-in-holy-water.html>

SWEDEN

Two Men Arrested for Setting Fire to Lutheran Church in Åmås

During the evening of August 26th, arsonists attacked a Lutheran church in Åmås. The perpetrators used at least one Molotov cocktail to set fire to the building, and broke several windows in the church and the parish hall.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/two-men-arrested-for-setting-fire-to-lutheran-church-in-sweden.html>

SWITZERLAND

Swiss Evangelical Party's Office Attacked for Supporting Pro-Life Demonstration

Vandals attacked the Zurich offices of the Swiss Evangelische Volkspartei (EVP) as well as the Swiss Evangelical Alliance and humanitarian organisations Tearfund and Opportunity.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/swiss-evangelical-party-s-office-attacked-for-supporting-pro-life-demonstration.html>

UNITED KINGDOM

British "Values Monitor" Says Opposing Homosexuality Could Be a Crime

A British values monitor claimed on September 18th that voicing criticism of homosexuality "might be breaking the law".

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/british-values-monitor-says-opposing-homosexuality-could-be-a-crime.html>

FRANCE

Burnt Confessional Investigated in L'Ile-Bouchard

A confessional in the church Saint-Gilles de L'Ile-Bouchard was burned and the organ was damaged on the 18th of September.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/burnt-confessional-investigated-in-l-ile-bouchard.html>

FRANCE

Treasured Statue Stolen from French Church

The statue of the Virgin Mary and Jesus, dating from the 15th century, was stolen from the church of Molin-sur-Aube.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/treasured-statue-stolen-from-french-church.html>

October 2015

UNITED KINGDOM

Prison Minister Fired for Preaching "Homophobic" Bible Verses

Reverend Barry Trayhorn, volunteering as a chaplain at a prison for sex offenders, recited bible verses include homosexuality in a long list of sins, along with adultery, theft and drunkenness during a service. Following the service, he was fired for breaching equality laws because the verses criticised homosexuality.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/uk-prison-minister-fired-for-preaching-homophobic-bible-verses.html>

FRANCE

Fourth Act of Vandalism Against Notre-Dame-du-Rocher in Saint-Hippolyte (Haut-Rhin)

On October 28th, a statue of the Virgin Mary was broken off its base. Previous vandalism led to the statue's replacement. In mid-September, the arms of the statue were broken and had to be glued back together.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/fourth-act-of-vandalism-against-notre-dame-du-rocher-in-saint-hippolyte-haut-rhin.html>

SPAIN

Mayor of Valencia Orders Removal of Christian Symbols in Cemetery

The Mayor of Valencia ordered municipal management to remove all Christian symbols from the General Cemetery of Valencia. The City intends to change the names of the chapels to “ceremonial halls.” In addition, they intend to remove crucifixes from public places and want to hide images of the Virgen de los Desamparados (patron Saint of Valencia).

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/mayor-of-valencia-orders-removal-of-christian-symbols-in-cemetery.html>

GERMANY

Desecration at Baden-Baden “Autobahn” Church

The altar, tabernacle, and pews of the well known church were desecrated by swastikas and other Nazi symbols carved into the wood, and acid poured onto the stone.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/desecration-at-baden-baden-autobahn-church.html>

SWEDEN

Christian Converts Harassed at Swedish Asylum Centre

A Christian Pakistani couple had to leave the shelter in Western Sweden after harassment by some of the Muslims in the housing ended with the husband’s name sprayed on a wall near their room calling for his death. The Swedish Migration Board was notified, but did not take any steps to protect the couple, according to the husband. Since they didn’t feel safe at the centre, they moved to a church shelter.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/christian-converts-harassed-at-swedish-asylum-center.html>

SWEDEN

Sweden Seeks to Deport Pakistani Christian Convert

The Swedish Migration Board issued a deportation order against Faisel Javaid, concluding that Christians from Pakistan do not need protection because they can just “keep their faith a secret.”

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/sweden-seeks-to-deport-pakistani-christian-convert.html>

GERMANY

Christian Convert Attacked in German Refugee Centre

A 24-year-old Iranian Christian was beaten with a baton by a Muslim Afghan man in an asylum centre, who allegedly declared that it was “not a sin to kill him”, according to police.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/christian-convert-attacked-in-german-refugee-camp.html>

FRANCE

Statue of Virgin Mary Decapitated in Aisne

The mayor was informed of the destruction of the statue on October 15th. The statue, beloved by the citizens of the small town, was erected on August 14th.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/statue-of-virgin-mary-decapitated-in-aisne.html>

AUSTRIA

Vandalism at Catholic School in Vienna

Graffiti consisting of two “Antifa” signs and one anarchy symbol was painted on a pillar of Catholic student parish event centre and dormitory.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/vandalism-at-catholic-school-in-vienna.html>

FRANCE

Serious Desecration and Theft at the Chapelle d'Effiat à Montrichard (Loir-et-Cher)

On the morning of October 14th, sacred objects in the chapel were desecrated: the tabernacle was forced open and the ciborium containing ten consecrated Hosts was stolen.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/serious-desecration-and-theft-at-the-chapelle-deffiat-a-montrichard-loir-et-cher.html>

SPAIN

Madrid Church Vandalized

Vandals soiled the walls, access steps, and bulletin boards outside the church of the Virgen del Alba de Alcorcón.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/madrid-church-vandalized.html>

FRANCE

Fire in French Church Investigated

A fire in the church of La Baume-de-Transit in Southern Drôme damaged furniture.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/fire-in-french-church-investigated.html>

SWEDEN

Christians in Gothenburg Threatened: "Convert or Die"

Assyrian Christians living in Sweden have been targeted with a string of threatening messages, including demands that they "convert or die."

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=812&search=Gothenburg>

SPAIN

Barcelona Parish Tagged with Abortion Message

The vandalism at the Parroquia del Espíritu Santo was reported to El Observatorio para la Libertad Religiosa y de Conciencia in Spain.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/barcelona-parish-tagged-with-abortion-message.html>

FRANCE

Masny Chapel Sacked by Vandals

La Chapelle du Champ Fleuri was the victim of desecration: The altar was overturned, the organ left in pieces, Communion wafers littered the ground, a statue of the Virgin Mary was decapitated, and liturgical vestments were burned.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/french-chapel-sacked-by-vandals.html>

BELGIUM

Chapel in Charleroi the Victim of Thieves

Thieves dismantled and carried away the metal roof of the Chapel of Saint-Joseph de Charleroi.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/chapel-in-charleroi-the-victim-of-thieves.html>

FRANCE

Blanzay Church Desecrated and Vandalised

Intruders damaged the tabernacle by attempting to force open the door, damaged the organ, and set fire to the statue of the Virgin Mary in the church of Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/french-church-desecrated-and-vandalised.html>

FRANCE

Arson in Normandy Church

L'église Sainte-Croix de Saint-Lô was the victim of arson on October 2nd. The entry display was torched and it took ten fire fighters and four fire engines to combat the blaze.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/arson-in-normandy-church.html>

UKRAINE

Evangelical Pastor Kidnapped by Militants; Released Four Days Later

The Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith reported that Pastor Taras Sen was taken hostage on September 27th in the city of Sverdlovsk in the Luhansk oblast by armed militants and released on October 1st.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/ukrainian-evangelical-pastor-kidnapped-by-militants-released-4-days-later.html>

November 2015

GERMANY

Christian Refugees are Subjected to Violence and Harassment by Security Personnel

A Christian convert was severely beaten by four security personnel at the Oberurseler Asylum Centre in the Frankfurt Rhein-Main region. Emergency personnel said he suffered from skull contusions, a monocular hematoma, chest trauma, and blunt abdominal trauma.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/christian-refugees-are-subjected-to-violence-and-harassment.html>

FRANCE

Cemetery Crucifixes Uprooted and Planted Upside Down

Acts of vandalism were discovered on December 1st in the cemetery of Villiers-le-Sec, between Creully and Courseulles-sur-Mer.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/cemetery-crucifixes-uprooted-and-planted-upside-down.html>

SPAIN

Artist Stole and Desecrated over 200 Consecrated Hosts

Spanish “artist” Abel Azcona stole more than 240 consecrated Hosts by pretending to receive Holy Communion at Mass. He then desecrated them by placing the Hosts on ground to form the word “Paedophile” in Spanish. Images of this were put on display in a public art gallery in Pamplona. Five days later, he claimed that he has acquired new Hosts, some of which were stolen during the Mass of Reparation held at the Cathedral of Pamplona.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/spanish-artist-stole-and-desecrated-over-200-consecrated-hosts.html> and <http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/spanish-artist-claims-to-have-32-new-consecrated-hosts-some-stolen-by-fans-during-reparation-mass.html>

SPAIN

Catalan Radio Station Airs Song that Repeatedly Calls Priests Paedophiles

The radio program “Mati i la mare que el va a pair” of the publicly-funded Catalan station Flaixbac, has developed a song leading up to Christmas which repeatedly calls priests predatory paedophiles and mocks the Eucharist.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/catalan-radio-station-air-song-that-repeatedly-calls-priests-pedophiles.html>

UKRAINE

Second Ukrainian Orthodox Church Desecrated in Same Town

Vandals desecrated a new church dedicated to Our Lady of Iveron, in the town of Rokitno in the Rovno region.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/second-ukrainian-orthodox-church-desecrated-in-same-town.html>

FRANCE

Taxpayers Fund Blasphemous Display in Martinique

“Yo Mama’s Last Supper” is a blasphemous parody of Da Vinci’s “Last Supper” in which the artist Renée Cox appears as Jesus Christ with full frontal nudity.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/taxpayers-fund-blasphemous-display-in-martinique.html>

FRANCE

Church Vandalized; Damage Estimate: € 800

Two copper gutter-pipes were stolen from the church of Gironde-sur-Dropt on the night of November 25.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/church-vandalized-damage-estimate-EUR-800.html>

FRANCE

Church Used to Film Obscene and Offensive Video

A musical group called “Les Chrétiens des Alpes” (Christians of the Alps) filmed a YouTube video in the church of Saint-Étienne in Dingy-Saint-Clair, which portrays priests in a sexually vulgar manner.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/church-used-to-film-obscene-and-offensive-video.html>

SPAIN

City Reduces Funding for Holy Week and Refuses to Fund to Corpus Christi

The Department of Culture in Palma de Mallorca has reduced municipal funding for events during the week leading up to Easter (known as “Holy Week” or “Semana Santa”, famous for grand processions) to just 3.000 euros, and has not allocated any funding to the important Catholic feast of Corpus Christi.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/city-reduces-funding-for-holy-week-and-refuses-to-fund-to-corpus-christi.html>

UKRAINE

Ukrainian Orthodox Church Plundered and Desecrated

The perpetrators stole money from the cash register of the church in the Diocese of Sarny, and lit fires in five different locations in the building.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/ukrainian-orthodox-church-plundered-and-desecrated.html>

UNITED KINGDOM

Christian Convert Violently Attacked Outside His Home

Nissar Hussain, who has promoted Christian Concern’s Safe Haven initiative to help protect Christians who have converted from Islam, was beaten with a pickaxe handle by two men while on the way to his car in Bradford.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/christian-convert-violently-attacked-outside-his-home.html>

SPAIN

Thieves Destroyed a Parish Church in Pajarillos

The unknown perpetrators forced the church doors open, destroyed the sacristy and sanctuary of the church. Additionally, they stole a tabernacle, ciborium (after dumping consecrated Hosts on the ground), chalices, patens, a candelabrum, and some of the sound equipment from the Church of San Ignatius of Loyola. The church was forced to suspend the Mass scheduled for the day.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/thieves-destroyed-a-parish-church-in-pajarillos-spain.html>

SPAIN

Chinese Karaoke to Ring in a Secular Christmas in Madrid

The mayor of Madrid announced plans for the city’s commemoration of the Christian holiday, which would include Greek dancing and Arabic foodtasting, among other programming activities. Funded by taxpayers, the city’s celebration of the Christian holiday of Christmas was transformed into a secular festival. The Puerta de Alcalá will not be lit with the image of St. Joseph, the Virgin Mary and the baby Jesus in Christmas lights, which had adorned the arches of the Plaza de la Independencia for nearly a decade. Additionally, the council decided to remove one of only two outdoor nativity scenes that could be seen in the capital. The explanation for this was it that does not meet the “artistic value” requirements that they want to promote in the Christmas program.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/chinese-karaoke-will-ring-in-a-secular-christmas-in-madrid.html>

NORWAY

Norway’s Child Welfare Services Removed Five Children from a Pentecostal Christian Couple

According to a petition in support of the family, which has attracted more than 22,600 signatures, the couple was charged with “Christian radicalism and indoctrination”.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/norway-s-child-welfare-services-removes-five-children-from-a-pentecostal-christian-couple.html>

UNITED KINGDOM

Lord's Prayer Advertisement Produced by JustPray.uk Banned in Cinemas

Digital Cinema Media (DCM), which handles advertising for Odeon, Cineworld and Vue cinemas refused to run the advertisement, shows the Lord's Prayer being recited by a members of the public ranging from bodybuilders to children, before the showing of the newest Star Wars film, claiming the minute-long video could offend some viewers.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/lord-s-prayer-advertisement-produced-by-justprayuk-banned-in-cinemas.html>

GERMANY

Apartment Owner Refuses to Rent to Employee of Pro-Life Association

A theologian who is an employee of ALfA (Aktion Lebensrecht for Alle) wanted to rent an apartment in Augsburg. The owner refused to enter into a lease with the man for the sole reason that he works for ALfA, which is seen as a "fundamentalist" association.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/apartment-owner-refuses-to-rent-to-employee-of-pro-life-association.html>

AUSTRIA

Arrests in Counter-Demonstration during Students for Life Procession

Counter-demonstrators interfered with the march against abortion by more than 100 participants in Innsbruck. The procession was disrupted as the marchers walked with lanterns; police had to intervene and arrests were made.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/arrests-in-counter-demonstration-during-students-for-life-procession.html>

FRANCE

Theft in Small 16th Century Chapel

A late 15th century wooden statue of St. Nicolas was stolen from the church of Saint-Léger-sous-Margerie.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/theft-in-small-16th-century-chapel.html>

FRANCE

Association of French Mayors Recommend Against Nativity Scenes on Public Property

The Association issued a "good secular conduct" handbook to local town officials to assist them in their decision-making about the installation of crèche and nativity displays.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/association-of-french-mayors-recommend-against-nativity-scenes-on-public-property.html>

FRANCE

Church Vandalized in Poitiers

A parishioner discovered the destruction at the Church of Saint-Cyprian. A large concrete statue of the Virgin Mary located at the church entrance was thrown to the ground and broken.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/church-vandalized-in-poitiers-france.html>

AUSTRALIA

Tasmania's Anti-Discrimination Commissioner to Investigate Catholic Church's Marriage Pamphlet

Politician Martine Delaney lodged an anti-discrimination complaint in September and on November 12 the commissioner announced it would begin investigation. Archbishop Porteous said: "In distributing the Pastoral Letter, 'Don't Mess With Marriage', my aim was to assist the Catholic community in understanding the teaching of the Catholic Church, at a time when debate on this matter was widespread within the community ... the intention was to inform the debate as leader of the Catholic Church in Tasmania, to ensure the Catholic community understood where we stand on the issue of marriage."

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/tasmania-s-anti-discrimination-commissioner-to-investigate-catholic-church-s-marriage-pamphlet.html>

UNITED KINGDOM

Public Funds Used for Play Depicting Jesus Christ as Transsexual

The play “The Gospel According to Jesus, Queen of Heaven” is part of the Outburst Queer Arts Festival in Belfast, and is advertised with the tagline: “Jesus is a transsexual woman.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/public-funds-used-for-play-depicting-jesus-christ-as-transsexual.html>

SPAIN

Radical Feminists Shouted “We Will Burn the Episcopal Conference” at Domestic Violence March

Violence against church hierarchy advocated by demonstrators at anti-domestic violence rally in Madrid.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/cases.html>

SPAIN

Desecration in Málaga Chapel

The Temple of Carmen Rincon de la Victoria was the victim of an attack that damaged the tabernacle, numerous articles of worship and devotional images. Additionally, there was vandalism painted in Arabic script.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/desecration-in-malaga-chapel.html>

GERMANY

Serious Arson Attack against “Demo für Alle”

The Magdeburg business office of “Demo für Alle”, a group that advocates against gender ideology and the sexualisation of children, was torched by unknown perpetrators. A vehicle used for demonstrations as well as part of the building were completely burned. The fire brigade quickly responded and prevented the spread of flames. The police launched an investigation. In the evening after the fire, on an extremist leftist website, an anonymous writer boasted about this attack and urged others to follow suit.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/serious-arson-attack-against-demo-fuer-alle.html>

ITALY

“Piss Christ” and Sexually Provocative Virgin Mary Displayed in Exhibition Sponsored by Italian Government

The Lucca Photolux photo exhibition, with the theme “Sacred and Profane”, and sponsored by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture and Tourism ran from November 21 to December 13.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/piss-christ-and-sexually-provocative-virgin-mary-to-be-displayed-in-exhibition-sponsored-by-italian-government.html>

FRANCE

Graves Vandalized in Mazères

On All Saints Day, a solemnity celebrated by Catholics and some Protestants, visitors to the Mazères cemetery discovered five graves, including a central cross, sprayed with orange paint with references to “Satanists”, among others.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/graves-vandalized-in-mazeres.html>

GERMANY

Popular German Catholic Blogger Threatened After Reporting About Arson

Dr. Josef Bordat wrote on November 3rd that he received an anonymous letter three hours after the publication of his report about arson against “Demo für Alle” (an anti-gender ideology and sexualisation of children advocacy organization). The letter read: “Don’t be a nuisance, you Catholic conservative idiot ... otherwise a fire will soon be delivered to you. Your address is known.”

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/popular-german-catholic-blogger-threatened-after-reporting-about-arson.html>

SPAIN

Church Vandalized with Arabic Graffiti; Holy Objects Destroyed

The unknown perpetrators broke into the Church of our Lady of Carmen in Rincon de la Victoria, Andalusia, smashed wooden statues of the Virgin Mary and Jesus on the cross, and spray-painted “Allah” on the wall.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/spanish-church-vandalized-with-arabic-graffiti-holy-objects-destroyed.html>

CANADA

City of Toronto Banned Christian Music Festival

The City of Toronto was threatened with legal action for refusing to grant a Christian group a permit to use a prominent downtown square for its annual musical festival next year, because the city determined that singing the name of Jesus in the public venue contravenes city policy against “proselytizing.”

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/city-of-toronto-threatened-with-lawsuit-after-banning-christian-music-festival.html>

UNITED KINGDOM

Proposed Mandatory LGBT Education in Scotland Would Violate Parents’ Rights & Put Teachers’ Jobs in Jeopardy

Pro-LGBT group Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) launched a petition demanding that children as young as five learn about homosexual, bisexual and transgender issues. The Free Church of Scotland objected on the grounds that this would violate parents’ rights to ensure education is conformity with their own religious convictions. Such a provision would force Christian teachers to choose between their faith and their jobs.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/proposed-mandatory-lgbt-education-in-scotland-would-violate-parents-rights-put-teachers-jobs-in-jeopardy.html>

December 2015

GERMANY

New Year’s Eve Mass at Cologne Cathedral Deliberately Disrupted

The shelling of the Cologne Cathedral with fireworks and firecrackers on New Year’s evening between 6:30 and 7:45 pm was a targeted disruption of the service.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/new-year-s-eve-mass-at-cologne-cathedral-deliberately-disrupted.html>

GERMANY

Nuremberg Church the Target of Firework Attack on New Year’s Eve

Similar to the attacks on the Cologne Cathedral on New Year’s Eve, hundreds of men gathered in front of the Lorenzkirch in Nuremberg and shot firework missiles at its roof. One person from the crowd is said to have proclaimed “We will burn Germany.” The pastor complained about fireworks being set off against the church, which dates from 1250. A witness said it felt like a targeted attack against a Christian symbol.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/nuremberg-church-target-of-firework-attack-on-new-year-s-eve.html>

ITALY

Statue of Hand Painted Baby Jesus Destroyed by Firecracker

In Villa d’Almè, a group of unknown perpetrators threw a big firecracker into the hut containing the crèche where the hand painted statue of the baby Jesus been placed on Christmas Eve.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/statue-of-hand-painted-baby-jesus-destroyed-by-firecracker.html>

SPAIN

Catholic Schoolchildren in Madrid Banned from Three Kings Parade

Approximately 800 students at a Catholic school in Madrid’s southern Carabanchel district were excluded from a local parade by city authorities. According to a statement issued by the children’s parents, they were excluded from participating because of their ‘Catholic belief system’. Every January 5th, children around Spain take part in the country’s traditional Three Kings parades, the evening before Epiphany, the day on which Spanish children traditionally receive their presents.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/catholic-schoolchildren-in-madrid-banned-from-three-kings-parade.html>

UNITED KINGDOM

Image of St. John the Evangelist Banned from Rochester Train Station

Network Rail, partly funded by taxpayer money, argued it was “overtly Christian” and that it would offend “multi-cultural values”.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/image-of-st-john-the-evangelist-banned-from-rochester-train-station.html>

FRANCE

Haut-Rhin Church & Crèche Tagged; Infant Jesus Burned

The figure of a nearly life-size Christ child was burned in a crib display on December 31 at about 10 pm, while the faces of his parents and a wall of the adjacent Catholic church were tagged with spray paint.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/haut-rhin-church-creche-tagged-infant-jesus-burned.html>

ITALY

Nativity Figure of Infant Jesus “Hanged” with Noose in Pitelli

An unknown perpetrator took the doll used in the role of the infant Jesus and hung it with a rope in front of the Nativity scene.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/nativity-figure-of-infant-jesus-hanged-with-noose-in-pitelli.html>

FRANCE

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph Figures Stolen from Villejuif Crèche

The figure of the infant Jesus was stolen first, and the figures of his parents, Mary and Joseph were stolen the next day, along with the crib and straw.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/jesus-mary-and-joseph-figures-stolen-from-villejuif-creche.html>

FRANCE

Religious Statues Spray-Painted at Libaux Site Dedicated to the Virgin Mary

Several religious statues, amongst which Jesus Christ was central, as well as a commemorative plaque and the floor were all spray-painted red in a grotto altar in Libaux.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/religious-statues-spray-painted-at-site-dedicated-to-the-virgin-mary.html>

FRANCE

Crèche Vandalized in Aix-en-Issart

The crèche in a public square was moved about five meters and partially emptied. Roofing planks were broken and the installation’s figures were damaged. An electric Christmas wreath that adorned the church was also stolen. The mayor filed a complaint with the police.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/creche-vandalized-in-aix-en-issart.html>

GERMANY

Christians Attacked in Berlin Mitte a Day After Christmas

After saying, “I am Muslim. What are you?” an unidentified Muslim man and others beat up five Christians. According to police, the young men who were attacked come from Serbia and Montenegro, and are Orthodox Christians. The office for political crimes within the police department took over the investigation.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/christians-attacked-in-berlin-mitte-a-day-after-christmas.html>

FRANCE

Suspicious Burning of Nativity Display in Giraumont

During the night between December 27th and 28th, the city’s nativity display was burned and partially destroyed.

<http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/case/suspicious-burning-of-nativity-display-in-giraumont.html>

ITALY

Statue of Jesus Destroyed on St. Stephen's Day

According to reports, the statue was completely smashed. The parish priest noticed the damage in the late evening, and noted that the statue of the Virgin Mary bore some signs of tampering, as well. This was not the first time that the crib was attacked by vandals, as the statue of Jesus was targeted in 2012.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/statue-of-jesus-destroyed-on-st-stephen-s-day.html>

SPAIN

Fire Completely Destroys City Manger Scene in Madrid

The manger scene in the municipality of Villa del Prado was completely destroyed by a fire on December 25th.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/fire-completely-destroys-city-manger-scene.html>

SPAIN

Public Nativity Scene Attacked by Vandals in Pamplona

On December 24th, vandals toppled and damaged figures in the enormous nativity scene, which is installed every year in a public park.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/public-nativity-scene-attacked-by-vandals-in-pamplona.html>

FRANCE

Two of Thirteen Crèche Installations Burned in Masevaux

The first crèche was damaged by fire on the night of December 22nd and the second, including the ornaments and figures, was completely destroyed by fire on December 24th.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/two-of-thirteen-creche-installations-burned-in-masevaux.html>

FRANCE

Church of Saint-Martin-sur-Ocre Tagged

In Loiret, a church was tagged with vulgar slogans during the night of December 26th.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/church-of-saint-martin-sur-ocre-tagged.html>

GERMANY

German Newspaper Refuses to Publish Church's Advertisement

The Weser-Kurier in Bremen refused to publish an advertisement of a local Evangelical church containing a bible passage.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/german-newspaper-refuses-to-publish-church-s-advertisement.html>

FRANCE

Tabernacle Vandalized in Naintré Church

Father Louis Villoutreys reported on Twitter that a tabernacle in l'église Saint-Vincent in Naintré was vandalized by unknown perpetrators.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/tabernacle-vandalized-in-french-church.html>

SWEDEN

National Association of Assyrians in Sweden Victim of Arson

The association's headquarters in the city of Södertälje was completely destroyed during the night of December 16th.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/national-association-of-assyrians-in-sweden-victim-of-arson.html>

FRANCE

Knife Attack and Murder in Grande Synthe Refugee Camp

According to Open Doors France, police investigated a knife attack by Iraqi migrants against Christian refugees which left several wounded and one 19-year-old man dead.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/knife-attack-and-murder-in-grande-synthe-camp.html>

GERMANY

Berlin Court Reverses Injunctions; Allows Incitement to Violence in the Name of Art

In the name of artistic expression, a Berlin court reversed injunctions it had issued and permitted the staging of a play ("Fear") which displays photos of pro-family organizers and explicitly incites hatred against them.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/berlin-court-reverses-injunctions-allows-incitement-to-violence-in-the-name-of-art.html>

ITALY

Men Attempt to Disarm Soldiers Guarding Cathedral in Rome

A Palestinian and a Tunisian attempted to disarm soldiers stationed outside Santa Maria Maggiore cathedral while yelling "Allah (God) is great", according to Rome police. The men were arrested and were charged with resisting and threatening an officer and instigation to commit a crime with intent to commit terrorist acts. They were given expulsion orders and taken to a migrant reception centre in the southern city of Bari prior to repatriation. A background check revealed they had several expulsion orders pending.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/men-attempt-to-disarm-soldiers-guarding-cathedral-in-rome.html>

FRANCE

Fire Investigated at Collegiate Church of Saint-Junien

Upon his arrival at the church, the priest discovered three small fires in separate parts of the church. There was extensive damage, with four banks partially burned, the book in which parishioners write prayer intentions was also affected. However, the greatest damage was to a mural that hung in the church. The burlap and felt mural of over 6 meters, was of great sentimental value to the parishioners.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/fire-investigated-at-collegiate-church-of-saint-junien.html>

FRANCE

Theft from Crèche in Hauts-de-Seine

A statue of the Virgin of Fatima, given to the parish of Sainte-Bernadette de Chaville by the Portuguese community, was stolen on December 14th.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/theft-from-creche-in-hauts-de-seine.html>

ITALY

Archbishop Disinvited from Elementary School Pre-Christmas Visit in Sardinia

The archbishop was surprised by the cancellation and has said he has visited countless schools and doesn't give religious education, but merely meets and gets to know the students. He also said he has "cordial meetings" with the Imam of Massari and that he meets almost every day with Muslim families. School officials point to respect for the "multicultural character" of their student body as the reason.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/archbishop-disinvited-from-elementary-school-pre-christmas-visit.html>

BELGIUM

Church Vandalized in Verviers, in the province of Liege

The church Sainte-Julienne, which had previously been tagged with spray paint, was again vandalized when rocks being thrown broke a window.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/church-vandalized-in-verviers-in-the-province-of-liege.html>

BELGIUM

Crèche Vandalized in la Grand-Place de Bruxelles

Three people were arrested after they vandalized the manger of the Grand-Place during the night. In addition to damaging the structure, they stole the figure of the baby Jesus and threw it on the ground.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/creche-vandalized-in-la-grand-place-de-bruxelles.html>

GERMANY

Hamburg Police Arrest Refugee for Attempted Manslaughter

The Hamburg police arrested Afghan asylum seeker Amir Mahaballa. He is said to have attacked and seriously injured a 24-year-old Iranian Christian at a refugee camp in October.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/update-hamburg-police-arrest-refugee-for-attempted-manslaughter.html>

FRANCE

Church Bells Destroyed in French Chapel

Vandals broke into the locked chapel of Saint-Hervé-Ménez Bré in Péder nec and rang the church bells so hard that one of them was irreparably broken while the other, off-axis from its support, became stuck.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/church-bells-destroyed-in-french-chapel.html>

SPAIN

Religious Images Prohibited in School Christmas Card Contest

A secular parents' association in Cantabria imposed the prohibition when they announced the annual card-drawing contest. The rules specify that the drawings "may not incorporate religious motifs" and any submission with religious elements will be eliminated from the contest.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/religious-images-prohibited-in-school-christmas-card-contest.html>

GERMANY

Christians Attacked by Guards in Refugee Camps

At the end of November, five Muslim security employees beat two refugees from Iran for having a bible in their room.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/christians-attacked-by-guards-in-refugee-camps.html>

SWEDEN

Syrian Arrested on Suspicion of Beating and Threatening 16 Year Old

A 26-year-old Syrian, known as "N.N.", was arrested on suspicion of beating and threatening a 16-year-old Christian at an asylum house in Borgholm.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/syrian-arrested-on-suspicion-of-beating-and-threatening-16-year-old.html>

FRANCE

Bancourt Mayor Forced to Remove Cross from Town Hall

After two residents in the village of 90 inhabitants filed a lawsuit, a court ordered the removal of a cross that had been hanging in the town office since 1926.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/bancourt-mayor-forced-to-remove-cross-from-town-hall.html>

FRANCE

Website of the Diocese of Bayonne, Lescar and Oloron Hacked

According to reports, this was a targeted hacking.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/website-of-the-diocese-of-bayonne-lescar-and-oloron-hacked.html>

FRANCE

Seventh Cemetery in 18 Months Desecrated by Vandals

The cemetery of Saint-Martin-des-Entrées was the seventh cemetery desecrated in eighteen months in Bessin (Calvados). This time, thirteen crucifixes were torn from their graves and were thrown to the ground, broken, or planted upside down.

<http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/seventh-cemetery-in-18-months-desecrated-by-vandals.html>

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