



OIDAC Europe

April 2026

Monthly Analysis







Anti-Christian Hate Crimes in Europe
OIDAC Europe Analysis April 2026

1. Summary

During the month of April 2026, the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe (OIDAC Europe) recorded **38 anti-Christian hate crimes** targeting Christian places of worship, religious symbols, religious spaces, and Christian individuals.

The recorded hate crimes comprise **15 cases of vandalism, 5 cases of desecration, 5 arson-related attacks, 2 thefts specifically targeting religious objects, 5 cases of physical violence, 2 cases involving vandalism combined with violence, 2 incidents classified as incitement, 1 case involving threats, and 1 disruption of worship**. Particularly serious incidents included arson attacks on a church in **Castrezzato, Italy**, and a church in **Arnsberg, Germany,** amid a growing vandalism at the same church, the destruction of a chapel in **Vechta, Germany**, through suspected arson, the explosion targeting a Christian pro-Israel centre in **Nijkerk, the Netherlands**, and several violent attacks against Christians and clergy in Ireland, France, and Spain. Recorded incidents included the **assault of a priest** during Mass in **Ireland**, an **attack on a Christian woman** in **Spain** after the perpetrator identified her religion, an **axe attack in Spain** accompanied by anti-Christian statements, and a **violent intrusion** into a church in **France** during Easter celebrations.

Several incidents also involved direct attacks on central Christian symbols and sacred objects, including decapitated statues, damaged crucifixes, anti-Christian and satanic graffiti, attacks on cemeteries and grave crosses, and repeated vandalism against churches. Incidents during Easter celebrations and Holy Week included the disruption of Easter liturgies, vandalism on Holy Thursday, and attacks timed around Easter weekend.

The highest number of incidents in April 2026 was recorded in **France (10)**, followed by **Germany (7)** and **Italy (7)**. Further cases were recorded in **Spain (5)**, **Poland (2)**, **Croatia (1)**, **Ireland (1)**, and the **Netherlands (1)**. Outside the European Union, incidents were additionally recorded in **Ukraine (2), the UK (1)** and **Switzerland (1)**.

In addition to the incidents outlined above, a considerable number of **thefts, attempted thefts, vandalism cases, and break-ins affecting churches and cemeteries** were recorded across several European countries in April. These included at least 7 thefts specifically targeting religious objects, 19 additional thefts or small thefts involving churches or parish property, 4 attempted thefts, 10 break-ins or attempted break-ins, 13 additional cases of vandalism, acts of property damage and graffiti targeting church buildings, cemeteries, sacrificial boxes, or church infrastructure, indicating repetitive or systematic patterns. While these incidents are not included in the statistical total of anti-Christian hate crimes because anti-Christian bias could not be clearly established, they nonetheless represent a continuing security concern for Christian communities and places of worship.

In addition, at least **8 fires or fire-related incidents with unclear causes** were recorded during the reporting period, including incidents in Romania, Italy, Germany,

Austria, France, and Sweden. In a particularly tragic incident, a historic church in Montenach was destroyed as flames consume roof and bell tower. These cases were not counted as anti-Christian hate crimes due to insufficient evidence regarding motive as of this month.

A further development published during April 2026 concerned the United Kingdom. A new report by the Countryside Alliance revealed that **271 crimes were committed on church property and other religious premises in Wales during 2025**, while across the entire United Kingdom the number approached **4,000 recorded incidents**. The figures were obtained as part of an ongoing campaign drawing attention to the security situation affecting rural churches and places of worship.

2. Trends: Physical Violence, Desecration, and Targeting of Sacred Objects

The incidents recorded in April 2026 show a continued high level of anti-Christian hostility in Europe, although the overall number of documented hate crimes was slightly lower than in March 2026. Compared to the previous month, April showed a noticeable increase in incidents involving direct violence against individuals and disruptions during religious ceremonies.

Several incidents occurred during Easter celebrations, Holy Week, or Easter weekend, including attacks during Masses, disruptions of religious processions, and vandalism committed on or around important Christian feast days. **Physical violence was particularly notable in April.** Recorded incidents included the assault of a priest during Mass in Ireland, an attack on a Christian woman in Barcelona after the perpetrator allegedly identified her religion, an axe attack in Spain accompanied by anti-Christian statements, and a violent intrusion into a church in France during Easter celebrations.

A second pattern involved **repeated attacks against sacred objects** and Christian symbols. Several incidents targeted statues of Mary, crucifixes, altars, grave crosses, tabernacles, and consecrated hosts. In Italy and France especially, multiple incidents involved direct attacks on central liturgical or devotional objects, including the scattering or theft of consecrated hosts and repeated attacks on statues and churches.

April also showed continued patterns of **repeated or serial targeting**. In Freising, Germany, multiple churches were vandalised within a short period. In the Italian province of Frosinone, a series of attacks targeted sacred statues across several towns. In addition, repeated thefts and burglaries affecting churches and cemeteries were recorded in several countries, particularly Germany and Italy.

Compared to March, arson-related attacks declined slightly, while incidents involving **violence, intimidation, and symbolic hostility toward Christianity became more prominent around Easter**. Anti-Christian graffiti, satanic inscriptions, ideological hostility, and intimidation directed at clergy or Christian institutions remained visible throughout the reporting period.

3. Hate Crimes by Countries

France

A total of 10 anti-Christian hate crimes were recorded in France in April 2026, including 4 cases of vandalism[1], 3 cases of desecration[2], 1 theft targeting religious objects[3], 1 case involving physical violence[4], and 1 incitement-related incident[5]. Particularly serious incidents included a violent incident, which occurred during Easter weekend in Arpajon, where a man entered Saint-Clément Church shouting "Allah akbar" before physically pushing a worshipper. In Sainte-Anne-d'Auray, hostile posters and slogans targeting Christianity were placed at the sanctuary during Easter celebrations in an action claimed by an Antifa collective.

Saint-Jacques-de-la-Lande near Rennes, around thirty graves were vandalised, including broken crosses and a damaged statue of the Virgin Mary. In Valenciennes, several religious artworks and objects were damaged inside Saint-Géry church. Additional incidents included the desecrations and thefts of consecrated hosts in Saint-Louis and in Dampierre-les-Bois, the vandalism against Notre-Dame Church in Surgères, the vandalism of a sculpture of Christ in Seine-et-Marne, and severe damage to Saint-Laurent Church in Rosny-sous-Bois during Holy Thursday.

Germany

A total of 7 anti-Christian hate crimes were recorded in Germany in April 2026, including 2 arson-related attacks[6], 3 cases of vandalism[7], 1 theft targeting religious objects[8], and 1 incitement-related case involving a political motive[9]. In Freising, repeated vandalism targeted churches on multiple occasions, including damage to church interiors and burn damage inside St. Georg Church. In Arnsberg, authorities investigated a suspected arson attack after smoke and burn marks were discovered inside the Church of Our Lady. A chapel in Vechta was destroyed by fire, which police are investigating as arson, on Easter Monday.

Additional incidents included the destruction of church windows in Pirmasens and vandalism directed against the residence of a Lutheran pastor in Cottbus in what was interpreted as an intimidation attack linked to political hostility. In Eppelborn, church property and religious objects including parts of a reliquary cross were targeted during vandalism and theft.

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[1] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11350, https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11313, https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11298, https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11224
[2] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11333, https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11325, https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11308
[3] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11324
[4] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11262
[5] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11234
[6] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11322, https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11238
[7] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11365, https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11373, https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11372
[8] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11370
[9] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11310

Germany also recorded a particularly high number of non-counted thefts, break-ins, attempted burglaries, vandalism, and fires affecting churches and church property. Several incidents showed repetitive or systematic targeting of churches and sacrificial boxes.

Italy

A total of 7 anti-Christian hate crimes were recorded in Italy in April 2026, including 4 cases of vandalism[10], 1 desecration case[11], 1 arson-related attack[12], and 1 disruption of worship[13]. Particularly serious incidents included an arson attack inside a church in Castrezzato where decorative fabrics on side altars were set on fire and a disruption of an Easter Vigil in Rome, when an individual entered a church and shouted blasphemous statements during Mass, causing distress among worshippers.

In the province of Frosinone, a series of attacks targeted sacred statues, including decapitated statues in public votive niches and the destruction of a statue of Padre Pio inside the Abbey Church of San Benedetto. Additional incidents included the scattering of consecrated hosts inside the Church of Sant'Anna in Palizzi, vandalism against the cathedral in Bitonto and the destruction of a stone crucifix outside a church in Santarcangelo di Romagna.

Italy also recorded numerous non-counted thefts, attempted thefts, break-ins, fires of unclear cause, and vandalism affecting churches and church property.

Spain

A total of 5 anti-Christian hate crimes were recorded in Spain in April 2026, including 1 case of vandalism[14], 1 desecration case[15], and 3 incidents involving physical violence[16].

Particularly serious incidents included the **axe attack in Montefrío**, where the suspect allegedly stated *"All Christians must die,"* and the **assault of a Christian woman** in Barcelona because of her religion. In Oviedo, a Holy Week **procession was disrupted** by individuals displaying hostility toward the religious event.

In Soria, a mutilated statue of Christ was discovered in a cemetery in what authorities suspected could involve ritual elements. In another incident, the historic cross on the summit of Aneto was deliberately cut down and thrown from the mountain.

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[10] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11347, https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11294, https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11302, https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11253
[11] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11228,
[12] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11293
[13] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11221
[14] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11329
[15] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11271
[16] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11270, https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11272, https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11273

Poland

A total of 2 anti-Christian hate crimes were recorded in Poland in April 2026, including 1 vandalism case[17] and 1 case involving threats[18]. In Trzebinia, satanic graffiti extensively defaced the façade of the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In Wierzenica near Poznań, reported arson threats against a historic wooden church led to continuous police protection over nearly two weeks.

Additional non-counted incidents included multiple thefts from churches and sacrificial boxes, cemetery desecration involving the theft of crosses and metal grave elements in Gdańsk and Sopot, and a violent rectory break-in in Lublin involving the violent assault of a priest. Due to unclear anti-Christian bias or primarily criminal motivation, these incidents were not included in the statistical count.

Additional Significant Cases

In Ireland, a priest was assaulted during Mass at Ennis Cathedral, **causing facial injuries.**[19] In the Netherlands, **an explosive device detonated** outside a Christian pro-Israel centre in Nijkerk shortly before Easter.[20] In Zagreb, Croatia, the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration was targeted during a nighttime vandalism attack in which stained-glass windows were shattered.[21]

Outside the European Union, two anti-Christian incidents were recorded in Ukraine. In Zhovkva, a statue of Mary was desecrated with red paint.[22] In addition, Russian forces attacked two Orthodox churches on Good Friday.[23] In the UK, police are investigating on suspicion of arson, after a serious fire broke out on the St George's Church cemetery in Dorchester.[24] In Switzerland, repeated vandalism and disrespectful behaviour affecting church and cemetery grounds were recorded in Villigen.[25]

A broader development published during April concerned church-related crime in the United Kingdom more generally. According to a new report by the Countryside Alliance, nearly 4,000 crimes affecting churches and other religious premises were recorded across the UK during 2025, including 271 incidents in Wales alone. The report highlighted increasing security concerns affecting churches, particularly in rural areas.

[17] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11304
[18] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11299
[19] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11362
[20] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11274
[21] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11257
[22] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11351
[23] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11225
[24] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11213
[25] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11257

4. Conclusion

The incidents recorded in April 2026 demonstrate that anti-Christian hostility in Europe continued to affect churches, Christian individuals, cemeteries, and sacred spaces across a broad geographical range. Although the total number of documented hate crimes was slightly lower than in March, the reporting period showed a continued high level of seriousness, particularly due to the number of violent incidents and attacks occurring during Easter celebrations and religious services.

Compared to the previous month, April showed fewer arson-related attacks and fewer large-scale desecration incidents, but more cases involving **direct violence**, **intimidation**, and **disruption of worship**. Repeated attacks on statues, crosses, tabernacles, consecrated hosts, and church interiors continued to form a central pattern. Several incidents also involved explicit anti-Christian hostility expressed through satanic graffiti, ideological slogans, or verbal attacks directed at Christians and clergy.

The April data additionally point to the continuing cumulative impact of repeated thefts, burglaries, vandalism, and security incidents affecting churches throughout Europe. While many of these incidents could not be conclusively classified as anti-Christian hate crimes and were therefore excluded from the statistical total, their repetitive and systematic nature nonetheless highlights ongoing vulnerabilities affecting Christian communities and places of worship.

As in previous reporting periods, the figures presented reflect only incidents documented by OIDAC Europe and therefore cannot capture the full extent of anti-Christian hostility in Europe. Nevertheless, the patterns identified during April 2026 continue to demonstrate persistent security challenges affecting Christian places of worship, religious communities, and visible expressions of Christianity across Europe.