

Fact Sheet: Anti-Christian Hate Crimes in Austria

Introduction: OIDAC Europe

The Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe (**OIDAC Europe**) is a researched-based NGO tasked with documenting anti-Christian hate crimes and discrimination across Europe. OIDAC Europe is accredited to **submit cases to the OSCE/ODIHR**, which publishes an overview of hate crimes on religious and various other grounds in its annual Hate Crime Data report. Alongside these findings, OIDAC Europe also publishes its collected data in its Annual Report.

Recent findings for Europe

On November 16, 2023, both ODIHR's Hate Crime Data and OIDAC Europe's Annual Report 2022/23 were published. These reports showed a similar prevalence of anti-Christian hate crimes in Europe. **OIDAC Europe** recorded **748 anti-Christian hate crimes**, which is an **increase of 44%** between 2021 and 2022, with **arson** attacks rising even by **75%**.

These findings match the **OSCE Hate Crime Data Report**, which recorded **792 anti-Christian hate crimes** in Europe, identifying **Christians as the second most targeted religious groups after Jewish believers**.¹

In **2021**, according to the OSCE, **Christians** were even the **most targeted religious group in Europe**.²

Anzahl OSZE Hassverbrechen 2021						
	Gesamt	Juden	Muslimen	Christen	LGBTI	Rassismus und Xenophobie
Hassverbrechen (ohne Nordamerika)	2380	290	285	679	641	567

¹ OSCE Hate Crime Data, 2021, <https://hatecrime.osce.org/hate-crime-data?year=2022>

Please note that the OSCE region encompasses a number of countries outside Europe, which need to be subtracted from the overall numbers in order to get the exact number for Europe.

² OSCE Hate Crime Data, 2021, <https://hatecrime.osce.org/hate-crime-data?year=2021>

Please note that the OSCE region encompasses a number of countries outside Europe, which need to be subtracted from the overall numbers in order to get the exact number for Europe.

Prevalence of Anti-Christian Hate Crimes in Austria

OSCE / ODIHR Data for Austria, 2022

In 2022 the OSCE Hate Crime Reporting recorded **189 anti-Christian hate** crimes in Austria, making **Christians the most targeted religious group**, followed by Muslims (184) and Jews (102).³

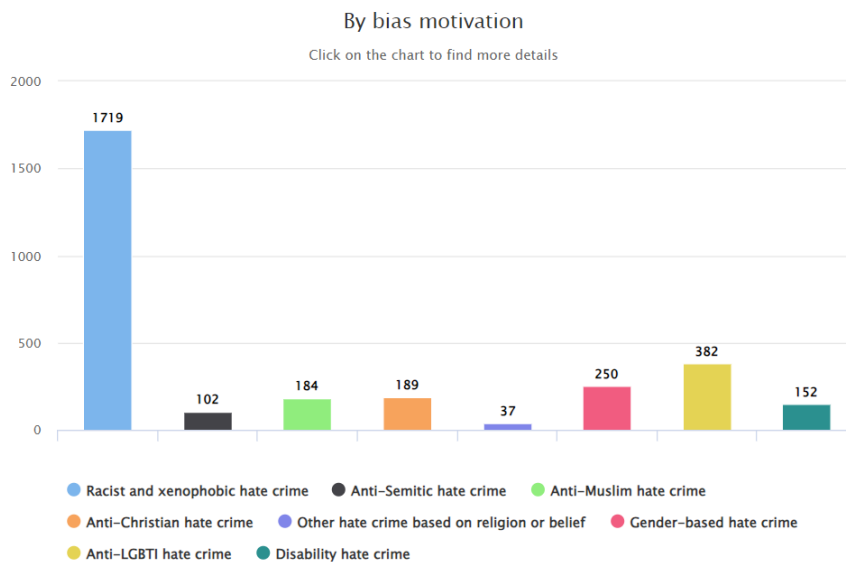


Figure 1: OSCE Hate Crime Data Austria, 2022

Among anti-Christian hate crimes, incidents of property damaged ranked highest, followed by vandalism, threats, robbery, disturbances of the peace and physical assaults.

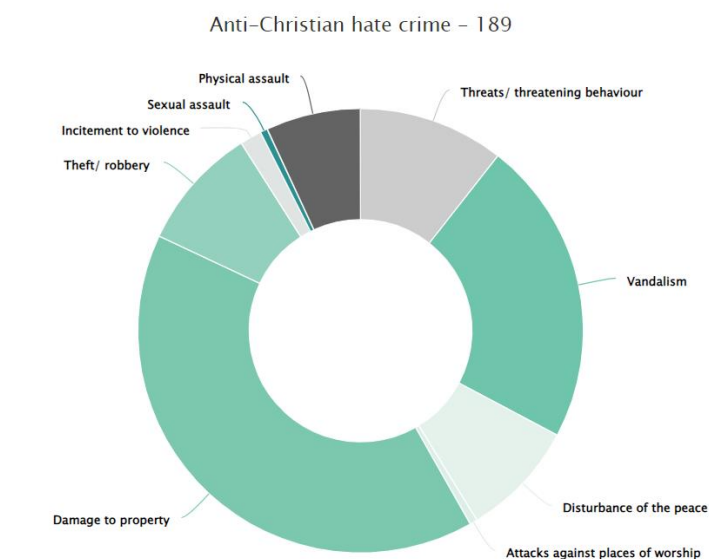


Figure 2: OSCE Hate Crime Data Austria, Anti-Christian hate crime, 2022

³ OSCE Hate Crime Data for Austria, 2022, <https://hatecrime.osce.org/austria>

It is important to note that the OSCE data does not include offences recorded under the Prohibition Act (§§ 3a-3h Verbotsg) and offences classified as insults or honour crimes, all of which fall outside of the OSCE's definition of hate crime.

Recent Cases Recorded by OIDAC Europe, 2022-23

OIDAC Europe records anti-Christian hate crimes on a regular basis. The following cases are **not exhaustive**, but shall provide some examples to better understand the phenomenon.

04.04.2022 – Evangelical Church in Zell Vandalised⁴

The Evangelical church in Zell was vandalised by strangers on April 4, 2022. A large window was smashed by an object of considerable size and shingles were torn off the façade.

28.04.2022 - Satanic Graffiti and Desecration in St. Vincent Church in Graz⁵

Satanic graffiti appeared in the St. Vincent church in Graz on the 28th of April, 2022. The word Satan, upside-down crosses, and the Antichrist number 666 were painted with red spray paint on the walls and altar of the church. The vandals also sprayed an angel's face red and **burnt a bible**. The Priest, Wolfgang Pucher commented, "It's just unbelievable."



06.05.2022 - Anti-Christian and Nazi Tags on Parish Church in Mautern⁶

The outer walls of the parish church in Mautern were **sprayed with Nazi symbols** on May 6, 2022. The police identified the perpetrators who were brothers from the Leoben district. The property damage was significant. One graffiti reads "F** Jesus".

29.09.2022 - Sacristan Brutally Beaten Up While Praying⁷

In the district of Haselbach in Braunau, a sacristan was **brutally beaten up during his evening prayers** on September 29, 2022. The perpetrator had asked the 87-year-old sacristan for money and when the latter refused, started to attack him. The victim was found by witnesses, who saw him **severely injured** and alerted the police.

20.04.2023 - Protestant Church in Graz Target of Vandalism⁸

On the 20th of April, 2023, the Protestant Kreuzkirche in Graz was targeted by vandals. The witness, Christine Pfau, was working inside the church when heard a sound noise and saw a coloured smoke through the windows. The vandals had smeared the walls, the pillars and the church doors with about 15 spray cans.



28.04.2023 - Church in Schwaz sprayed with Satanic Graffiti⁹

On April 28, 2023, the Maria Himmelfahrt parish church in Schwaz was vandalized. An inverted pentagram and the number "666" were sprayed in blue paint on the 500-years-old stone floor and on a confessional.

⁴ See: <https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=5528>

⁵ See: <https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=5708>

⁶ See: <https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=5756>

⁷ See: <https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=6245>

⁸ See: <https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=6844>

⁹ See: <https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=7077>

03.07.2023 - Statues of Jesus and Mary decapitated in Viennese Prayer Garden¹⁰

Statues of Jesus and Mary were **beheaded and vandalized** in a prayer garden in Vienna, Austria. The prayer garden is considered a spiritual oasis for visitors. The alarm was raised by two civilians who discovered the devastated prayer garden. A video shows the devastation of several objects in the garden, and the direct targeting of the statues, including violent **scraping of the faces**.



16.07.2023 – MS Bruck: Youths wanted to "Shoot all Christians" in their School Class¹¹



On July 16, 2023, two youths stood trial in Leoben on charges of terrorist association and criminal organisation. A 16-year-old and a 15-year-old had planned a terrorist attack on MS Bruck school, since early 2022. The police found out through their chats that the plans were far advanced. When questioned, the perpetrators confirmed that they **"wanted to shoot all the Christians in the class"**.

26.11.2023 - Threats and Disturbance inside Vienna's Cathedral¹²

On November 26, a 29-year-old man disrupted the Sunday Mass in Vienna's St. Stephan Cathedral. According to media reports, he repeatedly disturbed the liturgy, **jumped over the fence around the main altar and screamed loudly**. On November 27, the same man returned to the Cathedral and threatened the security guards inside the church with a screwdriver, **making signs that he wanted to cut their throats**. The police arrested the perpetrator close to the church venue.

Austrian Citizens' Initiative: „Petition für eine Meldestelle für christenfeindliche Akte“

Due to the increase in anti-Christian hate crimes and acts of vandalism in Austria and the suspected number of unreported cases, a current petition by the *Christian Democracy Platform* (Plattform Christdemokratie) calls for a **public, low-threshold documentation office for anti-Christian hate crimes**, similar to the Austrian documentation office for Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism.¹³

So far, around **2,000 citizens** have signed the petition. The initiative is also publicly supported by Open Doors, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), OIDAC Europe and Austrian clergy.

¹⁰ See: <https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=6853>

¹¹ See: <https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=6906>

¹² See: <https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=7073>

¹³ *Petition für eine öffentliche, niederschwellige Meldestelle für christenfeindliche Akte*, siehe: <https://www.christdemokratie.at/petition/>