

Christians Face Ongoing Attacks in Europe

More than three dozen attacks against Christians have occurred throughout July across Europe, a new report from the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians in Europe (OIDAC Europe) says.

Of the 40 cases reported, 18 were vandalism, 8 were arson-related, 7 were cases of desecration, 2 involved physical violence, 2 were threatening, 2 were thefts of religious objects, and 1 was vandalism combined with violence.

European countries experiencing the greatest number of incidents in July were Germany, with 15, and France, with 10. Italy had the third-greatest number, with 5. Other incidents occurred in Poland, Austria, Denmark, Finland, and Ireland. Outside of the European Union, anti-Christian hate crimes took place in the United Kingdom and in Turkey.



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"A further noteworthy development concerned attacks against Christian individuals. The assault on a Christian asylum seeker in Regensburg highlighted a form of anti-Christian hostility that remains comparatively under-reported," the report details. "The case also raised wider concerns regarding the recognition of religious motives in official assessments, as the reported attack began after the victim was confronted about wearing a Christian cross but was nevertheless described by the authorities as only secondarily religious."

One particular case in Germany involved an ISIS-inspired arson attack against an independent Christian church, the report notes.

Last month, the watchdog organization International Christian Concern (ICC) released an updated report on Christian persecution around the world, finding that churches are expanding in the face of violent action against them. Discussing persecution within the Western world, the report said, "While Christians in Western nations don't experience the same horrific persecution that believers in other hot spots face, religious freedom in corners of the West is eroding," and went on to list hindrances to freedom such as laws dictating where Christians can pray, educators losing their jobs or facing court battles due to their beliefs, and hate crimes against Christians in Europe.

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