

Man Convicted for Hate Crime Against Christian Churches

Arizona man Zimnako Salah, 45, was convicted of targeting Christian churches across the United States, constituting a hate crime.

Between September and November of 2023, Salah traveled to four churches in Arizona, California and Colorado, planning a bomb threat hoax. While two of the backpacks were planted, security prevented the other two backpacks from being planted. During this period, the Arizona man “had been building a bomb capable of fitting in a backpack,” the Justice Department explained.

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Upon searching Salah’s social media, authorities discovered that “he had consumed extremist propaganda online,” including videos of “Infidels dying” and ISIS activities.

Salah now faces up to six years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. He is scheduled to be sentenced on July 18.

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“Planting a hoax bomb at the Roseville church was not an isolated incident or a prank for this defendant,” Acting U.S. Attorney Michele Beckwith for the Eastern District of California said in a statement. “His actions were designed to threaten and intimidate the congregation because he disagreed with their religious beliefs. Thanks to the coordinated efforts of federal and local law enforcement and the attorneys from my office and our DOJ partners in Washington D.C., our communities are safer with yesterday’s verdict. People of all religions should be able to worship freely and exercise their First Amendment rights in this country without fear of

violence.”

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Attorney General Pam Bondi said the DOJ “has no tolerance for anyone who targets religious Americans for their faith. The perpetrator of this abhorrent hate crime against Christians will face severe punishment.”

The case was handled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation alongside local police departments.

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