

FRENCH ISLAMISTS ON A TEAR AGAINST CHRISTIANS

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On July 24, Notre-Dame des Champs in Paris suffered two consecutive fires: the first caused by an electrical malfunction; the second was confirmed as arson which burned wood panels and toppled a statue of St. Joseph. No arrests have been publicly reported. The iconic church remains closed while an investigation is ongoing and structural repairs are planned. While we are not yet sure who is responsible for the arson, we know that Islamists—radical Muslims—have committed the lion's share of these attacks.

In the last half century, the Muslim population in France has grown rapidly. Today, it is estimated that over six million Muslims live in France. Roughly ten percent of the French population adheres to Islam. This is the largest Muslim population in Western Europe in terms of size and percentage of the national population.

This rapid population growth has led to conflict between the native-born French population and the Muslim immigrants. This is most evident in the Islamist violence against French Catholics.

The Observatory of Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians in Europe tracks hostility against Christians across the continent. It reports frequently note of the open hostility that European Catholics face from Islamists and secularists. Looking at the Observatory's data on France reveals that extent to which the French Catholics are under siege in their own nation.

In the Observatory's combined report for 2019 and 2020, there were 270 hate crimes committed against Christians. Of these,

29 were arson, 56 were desecration, 56 were theft, 19 were threats/violence, 24 were vandalism of a Christian cemetery, 14 were vandalism of a chapel, 9 were vandalism of another church building, and 128 were vandalism of a church.

In 2021, the Observatory notes that there were 857 hate crimes committed against Christians. These crimes make up more than half of all religiously motivated hate crimes in France that year.

In 2022, the Observatory documents that there were 106 hate crimes against Christians recorded in France, including 16 cases of arson against Christians.

2023 is the last year that the Observatory has a full report. According to the French Ministry of the Interior, there were between 900 and 1,000 hate crimes against Christians. While the vast majority of these hate crimes targeted Christian sites, 84 Christians were victims of attacks against their persons. Likewise, criminal arson attacks in France continued to be a problem, with 8 confirmed cases in 2023.

Although there are no hard data on 2024 and 2025, anecdotal evidence suggest that the trend of Islamists committing violence on French Catholics is only getting worse.

While statistics are a useful measure of the extent of a problem, frequently they obscure the tragedy and suffering experienced on a human level. Below is a selective list of some of the more egregious attacks on Christians to provide a more detailed description of the plight of French Catholics.

January 14, 2020: A 25-year-old man was arrested for defacing Saint-Barthélemy church in Launaguet (near Toulouse) with inscriptions from the Quran.

October 29, 2020: Three people were killed when a radical Islamist wielding a knife attacked the Notre-Dame Basilica in Nice, France. One of the elderly victims was “virtually

beheaded," according to the authorities.

December 8, 2021: During a Marian procession for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in Nanterre, 10 radical Islamists attacked approximately 30 Catholics. As the Muslims threw water and a torch at the procession, some of the radicals were heard shouting, "I swear on the Quran, I will cut your throats!"

July 24, 2022: A Muslim man disrupted Mass at the church of Saint-Germain in Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

November 15, 2023: Unidentified vandals broke into the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in the city of Rouen and caused severe damage to the church. They destroyed the altar, smashed a statue, did severe damage to the sanctuary and stole sacred vessels from the church.

March 11, 2024: Vandals defaced more than 50 graves, the church door, and a World War I memorial in Clermont d'Excideuil with Islamist and Arabic slogans such as "Submit to Islam," "Isa will break the cross," and "France is already Allah's."

July 15, 2024: Muslim vandals broke into the Notre-Dame-du-Travail Church in Paris. They burnt papers and plunged a knife into the throat of a statue of the Virgin Mary. In addition anti-Christian and pro-Islam messages were written throughout the church. Some of the messages compared the Catholic Church to Satan and a "whore of religion." Another said, "Submit yourselves to Allah infidels."

March 10, 2025: Notre-Dame des Flots in Brittany was vandalized twice in two weeks: candles were smashed, liturgical books were torn, pews were overturned, and vases were broken.

April 18, 2025: As Catholics were preparing to observe Good Friday, priests in two different churches were assaulted, and

in one case the service was interrupted.

May 10, 2025: A Catholic priest in Avignon was surrounded, insulted, and threatened by a mob of young men shouting “Allahu Akbar” after evening Mass. The priest has condemned the incident as a brazen act of anti-Christian intimidation.

France is hardly the only country that Islamists have targeted, and their violence is not confined to Europe. Only now is there evidence that the Europeans are rethinking their overly generous immigration policies. They need to act—now.