



OIDAC Europe

September 2026

Monthly Analysis



OIDAC Analysis: Violent Incidents September 2026

1. Summary

During September 2026, the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe (OIDAC Europe) recorded **30 violent incidents against Christian individuals, religious symbols and places of worship**. Of these, 29 occurred within the European Union and one in the United Kingdom.

The recorded incidents comprised **12 cases of vandalism, 4 desecrations, 3 arson-related attacks, 3 physical-violence cases, 3 thefts targeting religious objects, 1 homicide, 1 terrorism plot, 1 threat, 1 disruption of worship and 1 case of harassment**.

The most serious incident was a **knife attack at a Benedictine convent in Jarosław, Poland**, in which **a priest was killed and four other clergymen injured**. The surviving priest publicly appealed against blaming Ukrainians collectively for the actions of the suspected attacker and cautioned against assumptions based on nationality.

Three further physical attacks affected a priest in Prato, a Christian content creator in Vienna and a nine-year-old boy in Höchst, amounting to a total of **eight Christians exposed to physical violence** this month. Other serious incidents included an alleged ISIS-linked plot against a church in Bremen, a knife-related threat inside a church in Moselle, repeated harassment of worshippers in Lunetta and the interruption of Mass at Westminster Cathedral.

The highest national totals were recorded in Italy (8) and Germany (5), followed by France (4), Poland (4), Austria (3), Belgium (2), Spain (2) and Malta (1). Outside the EU, one incident was recorded in the United Kingdom.

Alongside these incidents, 75 further thefts, attempted thefts, break-ins, cases of property damage and fire-related episodes affecting churches or religious sites were documented. They included thefts targeting valuable religious objects presumably for monetary value, as well as fires whose causes had not been determined. These cases were not recorded as anti-Christian hate crimes.

2. Trends: Fewer Incidents, More Serious Violence

While September had a **lower monthly total** with 30 recorded incidents, it was marked by a higher number of **severe attacks against individuals** and threats to religious communities.

August's exceptionally high total was driven largely by vandalism and desecrations, particularly a concentration of attacks on tabernacles and consecrated hosts in Italy. In contrast, September included **a fatal stabbing with four surviving injured victims, three further physical-violence cases**, an alleged **terrorist attack plot** on

a church, a **knife-related threat, harassment** of parishioners at prayer and the deliberate **disruption** of Mass.

At the same time, attacks on religious buildings and symbols were also recorded. In Germany, a **historic crucifix was set on fire** in Lucka and the **altar was defaced with swastikas**. In Spain, two churches were **desecrated**, including with scattering of consecrated hosts. In Belgium, repeated **vandalism** affected access to worship, including a memorial Mass that had to be held outdoors after church locks were filled with cement. In several communities, **repeated damage** prompted **temporary suspension** of services or restrictions on church opening hours outside worship.

Numerous other churches faced incidents, which were not included as anti-Christian attacks. Those included thefts of donations, copper and valuable objects, attempted break-ins and property damage. Furthermore, several fires were reported without an established cause. In Haar, Munich area, fireworks were thrown at several buildings, including a church.

3. Violent Incidents by Countries

Italy

Italy recorded 8 cases: 1 physical assault, 1 case of harassment, 2 desecrations, 2 cases of vandalism and 2 thefts targeting religious objects. In [Prato](#), a priest was threatened and attacked with a chair outside his parish church. In [Lunetta](#), repeated harassment of people praying, disturbances and damage to the churchyard led the parish to restrict morning access temporarily.

In [Formia](#), a man damaged the altar, religious statues and a Marian shrine.

Other acts of vandalism included damage to crucifixes in [Mezzolombardo](#) and [Colognola ai Colli](#). Cases of desecration and sacrilegious thefts were recorded at the [Madonna del Bosco Sanctuary](#) near Alfonsine, at a church in [Valgreghentino](#) and in [Ubiale](#).

A further 16 incidents of thefts, attempted thefts, break-ins and property damage, including thefts targeting valuable religious objects presumably for monetary value, were recorded, but not classified as anti-Christian incidents.

Germany

Germany recorded 5 cases, including an alleged terrorist plot against a church, an arson-related attack and 3 cases of vandalism.

Federal prosecutors arrested a suspected ISIS supporter over preparations for **plotting an attack against a church in Bremen**, allegedly involving acquisition of a firearm. The alleged attack was thankfully prevented.

In [Lucka](#), a **historic crucifix was set on fire and destroyed**, and **swastikas** and other symbols were found on the altar. In [Grainau](#), a wooden **figure of Christ was torn from a cross and smashed**. In [Flensburg](#), a **Catholic clinic was defaced** in connection with its position on abortion. Repeated vandalism at a church in [Lindenfels](#) led to restrictions on opening hours outside services.

A further **42 incidents** or episodes were recorded but not classified as anti-Christian incidents. Those included thefts of copper, money and valuable religious objects, break-ins and property damage. In Haar, Munich area, fireworks were thrown at multiple buildings, including a church, but also non-Christian buildings.

France

France recorded 4 cases, comprising 2 cases of vandalism, 1 arson-related attack and 1 threat.

In [Moselle](#), a man entered a church armed with a knife, searched for the priest and shouted “Allah Akbar”; he subsequently received a suspended prison sentence. At [Saint-Martin Church in Templeuve-en-Pévèle](#), two fires were deliberately.

In [Maizières-lès-Metz](#), almost 100 gravestones were damaged and crosses and crucifixes were broken; police are investigating whether Catholic graves had been deliberately singled out. In [Saint-Denis on Réunion](#), a man damaged the Church of Saint-Denis du Chaudron, including its baptistery.

Three further incidents concerned theft of church property and fires of undetermined or unconfirmed cause.

Poland

Poland recorded 4 cases: 1 homicide, 1 arson-related attack and 2 cases of vandalism.

At a [Benedictine convent in Jarosław](#), a **priest died after a knife attack** in which **four other clergymen were injured**. A surviving priest appealed for restraint in public reactions and urged people not to blame Ukrainians as a group for the actions of the suspected perpetrator who is a Ukrainian national.

In [Legnica](#), part of the grounds of a **Ukrainian Greek Catholic parish** was deliberately set alight, with **anti-Ukrainian graffiti** reported nearby. In [Radom](#), a man was accused of **damaging numerous Marian wayside shrines** and religious statues. Another incident involved a **Marian statue smashed** and defaced with paint at a [historic chapel](#).

One further incident involved theft of money from a church.

Austria

Austria recorded 3 cases, including 2 physical attacks and 1 act of vandalism.

In [Vienna](#), an **18-year-old Christian content creator** reported being **physically assaulted** by two youths and **threatened with a knife**; he sustained injuries and believed the attack was linked to his **Christian online content**. In [Höchst](#), a **nine-year-old boy** was allegedly **pushed, punched and kicked** after previously being **threatened** and **insulted over his Christian faith**.

In [Grein](#), church furnishings and devotional objects were scattered or damaged, including a baptismal font, cross and priestly vestments.

Belgium

Belgium recorded 2 cases of vandalism. In [Hoogstade](#), perpetrators **filled the locks of St Lambert's Church with cement**, preventing around 100 Catholics from entering and forcing a shortened **memorial Mass to take place outdoors** without Communion. In [Auderghem](#), repeated vandalism at St Anne's Church led to the suspension of services.

Spain

Spain recorded 2 **desecrations**. In [Guitiriz](#), intruders removed a tabernacle and **scattered consecrated hosts** outside the church. In [Noia](#), perpetrators opened a tabernacle and stole ciboria containing consecrated hosts, prompting a Mass of reparation.

Four further incidents concerned fires of undetermined cause and thefts, including of valuable religious objects presumably for monetary value.

Malta

In Malta, 9 religious relics were stolen from the Parish Church of [St Leonard the Abbot in Hal Kirkop](#). The Archdiocese described the theft as a sacrilegious and criminal act.

United Kingdom (outside EU)

In the United Kingdom, protesters entered [Westminster Cathedral](#) during the opening Mass of the annual March for Life, displayed banners and shouted slogans, interrupting the religious service. Outside the cathedral, participants also reported anti-Christian slogans and hostile behaviour.

Six further incidents or episodes in the United Kingdom involved thefts affecting churches and a fire whose cause was not established.

4. Conclusion

September was characterised by a contrast between the **lower number** of recorded cases and the **seriousness of several attacks**. The **fatal stabbing** at Jarosław, the **injuries** sustained by four other victims there, further **assaults** in Austria and Italy, the **armed threat** in France and the **alleged plot** against a church in Bremen show that threats to Christians during the month extended well beyond damage to religious property.

The interruption of Mass in London, harassment of people at prayer in Lunetta and the disruption of a memorial service in Hoogstade demonstrate the **effects of hostility on religious practice**. Repeated vandalism also prompted temporary suspension of services or restrictions on access to churches outside worship hours.

At the same time, attacks on tabernacles, consecrated hosts, crosses, religious statues and graves continued to affect communities in several countries. Further thefts, break-ins and property damage imposed **additional security burdens on churches**, even where the circumstances did not establish a religiously motivated offence.

The documented cases represent only those cases, which have been identified by OIDAC Europe at the time of reporting and do **not constitute a full account**. They do, however, demonstrate the importance of considering both the frequency and the gravity of attacks against Christian individuals, communities and places of worship.