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### **A priest attacked during the mass**

HRWF (01.12.2016) - While he was celebrating the mass in the parish church of *Nuestra Señora de Covadonga* in Madrid on 17 November, Fr. Lino Hernando was attacked at the altar by an unknown person who threw him to the ground, kicked and insulted him. The aggressor also threw around consecrated hosts and other worship items from the altar. The police was immediately alerted and arrested the vandal.

On 8 October, another priest was brutally attacked by several people in the Santa Rita Church in Vigo. Fr Antonio Rodrigues, 83, lapsed into a coma and was urgently transferred to hospital as he was at risk of brain damage from blood clots.

No further information about these two cases, the identity of the aggressors and prosecution could be found on internet.

Source: [ACI Prensa \(18 November\)](#)

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### **Two imams arrested in Spain over 'Islamic State support'**

***They were spreading hate speech through the social networks and were teaching children in the mosque***

HRWF (27.10.2016) - Two Moroccan imams were arrested on 25<sup>th</sup> October in the tourist town of Sant Antoni de Portmany (Ibiza) on suspicion of backing the Islamic State group and inciting jihad.

"They publicly and repeatedly expressed on social networks their support for the terrorist group Daesh, its methods and its Salafist-jihadist ideology," the Civil Guard said in a statement.

The Civil Guard gave the ages of the pair as 31 and 35, but did not name them. They are only known by their initials: A.E.M. and J.R. AFP reported both were imams, but according to local newspaper *Diario de Ibiza*, the older of the two was a construction worker assisting the imam. (See <http://bit.ly/2ficOBN> ). Both are Moroccan nationals. Six years ago, they were arrested for maltreating and beating pupils with a stick in the Koran school at the same mosque (Masjid al Fath).

They were "imams in a mosque, a privileged position from which to exert influence over members of the Muslim community on the island," the Civil Guard said.

A spokesman for Spain's Interior Ministry said: "One of the things that most anxious investigators was the influence that both individuals exerted on the members of the

Islamic community in Ibiza, highlighting as especially serious the problem of children who went to classes they taught themselves at the mosque".

The Spanish authorities have arrested 156 people since 2015 on suspicion of being jihadists.

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## **Religiously motivated hate crimes against Catholic churches**

HRWF (22.10.2016) - Spain has expelled a Moroccan citizen after he admitted a string of attacks on church buildings in Spain. Spanish police suggested that the man appeared to have become radicalised after returning home to Morocco during the summer. In early September he set fire to the ancient altarpiece in the church of Fontellas, in Navarre province. At the time local police stated that he had admitted damaging other local churches and his crime was "strictly for ideological reasons of a religious character." They added that "he thinks he has earned a place in heaven" by doing so. Noteworthy, no Spanish media mentioned the name of the vandal and said what would happen to him in Morocco.

Despite a restraining order being imposed on him – which forbade him from going anywhere near Christian places of worship – he was arrested again a week later after destroying the cross on top of the church at Ribaforada and this time detained in custody until his court appearance.

He has now been expelled from Spain and also banned from the EU's Schengen zone for ten years.

### ***Moroccan man arrested for attack on Spanish church***

On September 8<sup>th</sup>, the day recognized by Catholics as of the Nativity of the Virgin (the day of the birth of the Virgin Mary), a Moroccan man admitted setting a fire that destroyed an ancient altarpiece and beautiful images in the church of Fontellas in Navarre. According to local newspapers, part of the decoration of the chapel ceiling fell to the floor and the nave was black with soot.

The priest alerted firefighters of the fire at noon, when he saw the smoke coming out of the temple bell. Firefighters quickly extinguished the fire and local authorities began an investigation into the fire, as there were reasonable grounds to believe it was intentionally set.

The Archbishop of Pamplona-Tudela, Mons. Francisco Pérez González, expressed his "sadness, pain and disgust" by the attack on the church, an act that "offends all people of Fontellas and all Christians of Navarre." In a statement he explained that an attack on the image of the Virgin "offends she whom we want as a mother" and who "deserves the respect of all."

On September 9<sup>th</sup>, police arrested the alleged perpetrator. According to the police, the burning of the Virgin was "strictly for ideological reasons of a religious character."

A court considered this an Islamist attack and issued a restraining order prohibiting the alleged arsonist from coming within 10 meters of Catholic churches or any buildings or places used for Catholic worship, as well any private or public Catholic functions. This order was to remain in effect until the court case was closed.

The restraining order was issued as a precautionary measure because of the "risk" presented by this man: he himself recognized that after spending time in his home country this summer, his attitude changed radically. Now, after admitting that he had damaged other churches in recent days, he said he had earned a place in heaven and he did not regret any of his actions.

### **Other attacks in 2015**

In September 2015, a 27-year old Moroccan attacked a statue of the Virgin Mary near Malaga (See <http://bit.ly/2ey5bnJ>).

On 1st November 2015, the parish priest of Rincón de la Victoria (Malaga) discovered that the tabernacle of the Chapel of Torre de Benagalbón had been forced but could not be opened. However, worship items and religious pictures were damaged or broken. The perpetrators wrote with black painting the name of Allah inside the church.

Sources: [Actuali](#) and [Navarra.com](#) - [Info Católica](#) - [L'Observatoire de la Christianophobie](#) - Barnabas Fund

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## **Moroccan man arrested for "Islamist" attack on Spanish church**

Intolerance against Christians (08.09.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2c9WDpk> - A Moroccan man admitted setting a fire that destroyed an ancient altarpiece and beautiful images in the church of Fontellas in Navarre on September 8, the day recognized by Catholics as of the Nativity of the Virgin (the day of the birth of the Virgin Mary).

On September 9th, police arrested the alleged perpetrator, a man of Moroccan nationality. According to the police, the burning of the Virgin was "strictly for ideological reasons of a religious character."

A court considered this an Islamist attack and issued a restraining order prohibiting the alleged arsonist from coming within 10 meters of Catholic churches or any buildings or places used for Catholic worship, as well any private or public Catholic functions. This order will remain in effect until the court case is closed.

The restraining order was issued as a precautionary measure because of the "risk" presented by this man: he himself recognized that after spending time in his home country this summer, his attitude changed radically. Now, after admitting that he had damaged other churches in recent days, he thinks "he has earned a place in heaven" does not regret any of his actions.

Police are investigating other acts committed in churches in nearby locations to which the detainee has verbally admitted that he forcibly entered and damaged various religious symbols.

The fire in the church mainly affected the image of the Virgen del Rosario, patron saint of the town and two other images of the Virgin in the church. The priest alerted firefighters of the fire at noon, when he saw the smoke coming out of the temple bell. Firefighters quickly extinguished the fire and local authorities began an investigation into the fire, as there were reasonable grounds to believe it was intentionally set.

According to local newspapers, part of the decoration of the chapel ceiling fell to the floor and the nave was black with soot.

The Archbishop of Pamplona-Tudela, Mons. Francisco Pérez González, expressed his "sadness, pain and disgust" by the attack on the church, an act that "offends all people of Fontellas and all Christians of Navarre." In a statement he explained that an attack on the image of the Virgin "offends she whom we want as a mother" and who "deserves the respect of all."

For more information (in Spanish):

[Article on Navarra.com](#)

[Article on Actual.com](#)

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