

Anti-Christian incidents on the rise but sharp fall for anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish incidents

By Willy Fautré, *Human Rights Without Frontiers*

HRWF (03.02.2017) - According to the annual report of the French Ministry of the Interior published on 1st February, the number of racist, anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish incidents largely decreased last year while the number of anti-Christian incidents dramatically increased over the same period.

After a record number in 2015 (2034 incidents), racist, anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim incidents clearly decreased in 2016 with 1125 incidents (-44.7%). These statistics are reflective of incidents (acts of violence, arsons, degradations...) and threats (insults, hate speech...) about which complaints were filed.

Anti-Muslim incidents

At the same time, the *Collectif contre l'Islamophobie en France* (CCIF) and the *Observatoire National contre l'Islamophobie* (ONCI) have published their own report, which confirms the trend measured by the Ministry of the Interior, but also notes that this has not impacted the level of tolerance towards Muslims.

According to the CCIF, anti-Muslim incidents diminished by 35.9% in 2016 in comparison with 2015 and by 24.1% against 2014. Under the heading "discrimination" (419 cases), the CCIF also includes acts of vandalism (25), assaults (39) and hate speech (98). Most recorded discrimination incidents are committed in public services (64%). These internal statistics are related to the number of cases directly referred to the CCIF.

The ONCI recorded 186 cases of anti-Muslim incidents in 2016 against 429 in 2015, a decrease of 57.6%: 64 "acts" (against 124) and 118 "threats" (against 305). These statistics are related to incidents leading to the filing of a complaint.

The general decrease in anti-Muslim incidents is said to be due to several factors: bigger social empathy and solidarity towards Muslims, policies against Islamophobia as well as securing mosques and prayer places by law enforcement forces (initiatives supported by 341,000 EUR in 2016 and 756,000 EUR in 2015). The strategy of ISIS terrorist attacks aiming at dividing France's civil society and fueling anti-Muslim sentiments has obviously failed.

Anti-Jewish incidents

According to French interior ministry figures, there were 57.6 percent fewer anti-Semitic incidents in 2016 compared with the previous year.

The French government sees this drop as "the fruit of government initiatives", in particular a €100 million campaign to "fight racism, anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination linked or originating from religion".

According to the January 22 report compiled by the Israeli ministry for diaspora affairs, the number of anti-Semitic attacks in France dropped, by 63.6 percent, between 2015 and 2016. Much of the credit for this drop is due to the French government, which in 2015 launched an anti-racism initiative involving hundreds of posted police officers and soldiers patrolling near Jewish schools and synagogues, said the Israeli ministry.

Anti-Christian incidents

According to the Ministry of the Interior, 949 anti-Christian incidents - 399 acts of vandalism and 191 cases of theft of worship items - were recorded on the French territory in 2016 but this does not include the hacking of Catholic websites which were said to number 112 by the French Observatory of Christianophobia. Some comparative statistics:

- Anti-Christian incidents: 17,4% increase between 2015 and 2016.
- Incidents targeting Christian sites (places of worship and tombstones: 245% increase between 2008 and 2016.
- Incidents concerning Christian places of worship in 2016: 90% of incidents concerning all places of worship (Christian, Jewish and Muslim).

The Ministry of the Interior notes that there was a satanist motivation behind 14 incidents and in 25 cases there was an anarchist connotation.

In France, there are about 45,000 church buildings, 2500 mosques and 500 synagogues. According to the Ministry of the Interior, 2400 Christian places of worship, 1090 Muslim buildings and 817 Jewish sites (synagogues, schools and community centers) are protected by law enforcement forces. In the last two years, an interministerial fund for the prevention of delinquency has granted 12.5 million EUR to provide the most sensitive religious sites with security and video-protection material.

Recommended reading:

[En 2016, les actes racistes, antisémites et antimusulmans ont baissé en France, mais pas les actes antichrétiens](#)

[Number of racist incidents in France plummets](#)

[Les actes antimusulmans en forte baisse en 2016](#)

[Sortie du rapport 2017 du CCIF : une évolution du fait islamophobe](#)

[Baisse des actes racistes, antisémites et anti-musulmans en 2016](#)

ANNEX

Evolution de l'islamophobie selon le décompte...

