

## **Attempted arson against an Armenian Evangelical Church and other acts of anti-Christian vandalism in France**

HRWF (11.04.2017) - On 2 April, there was an attempt of criminal arson against Armenian Evangelical Church in Alfortville (Val-de-Marne). A garbage can was filled with petrol in front of the building and set on fire.

Pastor Gilbert Léonian expressed his anger in the media because the local authorities had not taken any measure when on 26 February acts of vandalism had been perpetrated against the building. The pastor does not exclude that the attacks were motivated by his inviting pastor Norek Hovsétian of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Bagdad for a cycle of conferences in France about the situation of Christians in the Middle East.

A number of other acts of vandalism have also recently been reported by the French *Observatoire de la Christianophobie*:

The church of *Saints-Pierre-et-Paul* in Buchy (Seine Maritime) on 4 April

The church of *Saint-Saturnin* de Vineuil (diocese of Blois, Loir-et-Cher) on 8 and 30 March

The calvary of Redon in Ille-et-Vilaine (End of March)

Over 30 tombstones in the cemetery of Batignoles (Paris) on 1 April

In La Réunion, the Marian Shrine of the *Black Virgin* in Rivière des Pluies was vandalized in the 2-3 April night. The statue of the Virgin was partly destroyed and it is not sure that it will be possible to repair it before the 1 May pilgrimage. In the following days, several Catholic oratories were also vandalized on the island.