

FRANCE: Sharp decrease of anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim incidents but increase of anti-Catholic incidents

HRWF (09.01.2017) – During the first eleven months of 2016, anti-Semitic incidents have sharply decreased by 65% and anti-Muslim incidents by 60%, according to statistics provided by the Ministry of the Interior to the French newspaper “Le Figaro” (See the full article dated 28 December 2016 at <http://bit.ly/2ip0IF9>). However the newspaper keeps silent about the number of incidents concerning Christians, Jehovah’s Witnesses and other faiths in France; but do such state statistics even exist for other religious communities?

In 2015, 808 anti-Semitic incidents and threats were recorded, this number fell to 294 incidents in 2016 according provisional statistics. In 2015, 429 complaints were filed on the grounds of anti-Muslim incidents and threats. From January to November 2016, 173 of such complaints were filed.

According to the Observatoire de la Christianophobie, 375 anti-Catholic incidents were recorded in 2016 and 273 in 2015, an increase of 37,4 % (<http://bit.ly/2johW9B>). Recent incidents mainly targeted nativity scenes.

On 6 January 2017, the nativity scene of the St Charles Cathedral in Saint-Etienne (Eure) was partly destroyed by an arson attack. The mayor, Gaël Perdriau (Republican political party), condemned this act as a desecration of a place of worship, a criminal offence.

At the end of December, the baby Jesus was stolen from the manger of the Sainte-Madeleine church in Hyères (Var) and from the display of the Planquay church in Saint-Ouen (Seine-Saint-

Denis). On the night of 17th December, all the figurines in a display in Fouchères (Aube) were thrown into the river Seine by an unknown person.

On 24 December, the angel of the St Anne church in Lanveoc (Finistère) was stolen. The mayor, Louis Ramnoé, found this act scandalous. The statue had been in the church for 80 years.

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