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## **A Catholic Church attacked during the mass in Istanbul: one dead**

HRWF (30.01.2024) - On 28 January, during a Sunday Mass, two masked assailants attacked the Santa Maria Catholic Church in the Büyükdere quarter of Sariyer district of Istanbul. 52-year-old Tuncer Cihan was killed in the shooting.

It was reported that during the attack, around 35 to 40 people were in the church, who threw themselves on the ground after the shooting began. The reason of the attack was unknown.

Police raided 30 locations and detained a total of 47 people as part of the investigation into the attack.

Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said shortly before midnight that two men he described as members of the Islamic State extremist movement had been arrested. One of the terrorists is from Tajikistan, and the other one from Russia.

The Islamic State group soon claimed responsibility for the attack.

On 3 January this year, 25 suspected Islamic State members were arrested across Turkey, accused of plotting attacks on churches and synagogues, according to state-run Anadolu Agency.

The church was founded and is run by an Italian order of Franciscan friars. The construction of the church began in 1864, and it was opened to worship in 1866.

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