



**Civil Society Contributions to OSCE-ODIHR anual reports:**

**Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region – incidents and responses**

**HCR 2013 Observatorio para la libertad religiosa y de conciencia (*Spanish observatory of freedom of religion and conscience*)**

**24 April 2014**



(You will burn like in '36 –start date of the Spanish Civil War-, common graffiti written on church walls in Spain)

**María García** (olreligiosa@libertadreligiosa.es)

President of the *Observatorio para la Libertad Religiosa y de Conciencia*

**Nicolás Zambrana-Tévar PhD LLM** (nicolaszambranatevar@hotmail.com)

Lecturer

## Introduction and context

This report is based upon a more extensive and thorough analysis of attacks against religious freedom in Spain, which has been drafted in Spanish by the *Observatorio para la libertad religiosa y de conciencia* (Spanish observatory for freedom of religion and conscience; <http://libertadreligiosa.es/>) for the year 2013 (<http://libertadreligiosa.es/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ATAQUES-A-LA-LIBERTAD-RELIGIOSA-EN-ESPA%C3%91A-2013.pdf>).

In order to properly understand the reasons behind the attacks made on Christians and the Christian Churches in Spain, during the past year, it is necessary to devote a few lines to the legal framework of religious freedom in the aforementioned country, as well as to its specific political situation.

The Spanish Constitution protects freedom of religion in its art. 16, along with freedom of thought, which is granted the same importance. According to said paragraph, freedom of religion belongs not only to individuals but also to communities and its only limits are respect for public order. Spain is also a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose article 18 protects freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

The Spanish Constitution also declares that Spain is a Social and Democratic State (art. 1.1), subject to the rule of law. The fact that it mentions Spain as a Social State has been understood by most scholars as an indication to the State and its Public Administration, given by the Constitution itself, to make itself present in society, in order to guarantee all the freedoms and constitutional rights granted by this supreme norm. This means that, even if the right to adequate housing (art. 47 CE) cannot be protected by ordinary courts, the State is enabled to engage in economic policies aimed at providing housing for everyone.

As far as freedom of religion is concerned, the fact that Spain is a social State also means that the Spanish State and the Spanish Government are not supposed to simply allow citizens to practise their religion freely but is also enabled to and has the duty to provide individuals and communities with the means to enjoy that right. For instance: art. 27.3 of the Constitution shows that the Government must guarantee the right that parents have to ensure that their children receive the religious and moral education that is in accordance with their own beliefs. This right has been protected specifically by means of the Accords signed between the Holy See and the Spanish Government in 1977, whereby children must be able to have courses on Catholic religious teaching in State schools (protestant, muslim and jewish children enjoy the same right, through parallel accords). Nevertheless, as it will be shown, this constitutional right is being harshly contested by most Spanish parties and some are even announcing that they will abolish these Accords when they have the opportunity. For instance, courses of religious teachings are discriminated because their grades are purposeless towards the children's overall school grades. Furthermore, a great number of Spanish children attend subsidized religious schools under the umbrella of the "Social State" obligation. Still, some regional Governments continuously refuse to grant any subsidies to these schools.

There are several reasons why 2013 has been a very worrying year for freedom of religion in Spain, specially as regards christians. In the first place, the Government has announced that it

may introduce a new abortion law which may be more restrictive than the 2009 law but much more permissive than the abortion law introduced by the Socialist government in 1985. Still, the Socialist party, and many other parties and civil society organisations, have criticised the Church very rudely (and even violently) because, with no evidence at all, they believe that the Catholic Church is behind this intended reform, although the Minister of Justice (Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón) the one who has in fact tried to introduce this new law, in accordance with his party's electoral promises, is known not to be on very good terms with the hierarchy of the Church.

There are other signs that make 2013 a particularly difficult year for the Spanish Catholic Church and for Catholics in general. Practically every month, harsh accusations have been made on bishops or on the Church as a whole and requests have been made to abolish the Accords with the Holy See which guarantee the teaching of religion at school for those who wish to, while at the same time many difficulties are being introduced to the teaching of religion, but claiming that the International Accords are nevertheless being respected.

Furthermore, the Catholic Church, like many other private and public institutions and charities, is exempted from taxes levied on real estate but many politicians, every month, have denounced this so called "privilege" with very harsh and rude arguments. Other false and unbelievable accusations against the Church, which may be behind the violent episodes which are about to be described, are the accusation of being behind a new reform of the education law which, nevertheless, does not introduce any advantages to the teaching of religion in schools.

Finally, during 2013, several martyrs murdered during the Spanish Civil War<sup>1</sup> were beatified in Tarragona (Catalonia). Although the Spanish Catholic Church has tried hard to deny and suppress any kind of political connotations in this ceremony, several political groups have tried to politicize this purely religious event, accusing the Church of stirring the past

## **Crime type**

- 1- Homicide
- 2- Physical violence
- 3- Damage to property
- 4- Vandalism
- 5- Desecration of graves
- 6- Attacks against places of worship
- 7- Threats/threatening behavior
- 8- Other crimes can also be included and described (hate incidents)

---

<sup>1</sup> During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), close to 7.000 clergy men, monks and nuns, along with more than 3.000 lay men were killed for religious reasons.

## Bias indicators

- 1- Victim/Witness Perception
- 2- Comments, Written Statements, Gestures, and Graffiti
- 3- Racial, Ethnic, Gender, and Cultural Differences
- 4- Organized Hate Groups
- 5- Previous Bias Crimes/Incidents
- 6- Location indicates bias

## Attacks against temples and religious buildings

Chart 1

Incident	Bomb placed in Cathedral of La Almodena
Date, time, location	7 February Madrid
Country	Spain
Source of information	<a href="http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2013/02/07/madrid/1360245221.html">http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2013/02/07/madrid/1360245221.html</a> <a href="http://www.abc.es/sociedad/20130208/rc-grupo-anarquista-asume-bomba-201302081229.html">http://www.abc.es/sociedad/20130208/rc-grupo-anarquista-asume-bomba-201302081229.html</a>
Victim(s) involved (number / name)	Catholic church, churchgoers
Crime type	3- Physical violence 6- Attacks against places of worship
Perpetrator(s) (if known)	Anarquist group called "Mateo Morral" <sup>2</sup>
Brief description of incident with bias indicators	An anarquist group named after a famous terrorist ( <i>Comando Mateo Morral</i> ) placed a "home-made" bomb in the Cathedral of La Almodena. The bomb contained 1200 grams of gun powder and almost one kilogram of screws. The bomb was discovered by a priest in a confessional by chance and deactivated by specialists from the Police, after emptying the temple
Bias indicators	2- Comments: the anarquist group declared that the Church is part of the capitalist structure 4- Organized Hate Groups 6- Location indicates bias

---

<sup>2</sup> Mateo Morral was the name of the anarquist who attempted to assassinate King Alphonse XIII and his wife Queen Victoria Eugenia on 31 May 1906, with a bomb that killed 24 bystanders.

Status of the case	
Response of local authorities	Police have commenced investigations
Impact on the victim(s) and the community	

## Chart 2

Incident	Young man enters church, pulls down crucifix and breaks it
Date, time, location	11 February 2013, Cádiz
Country	Spain
Source of information	<a href="http://www.diariodecadiz.es/article/cadiz/1457014/estudiante/erasmus/causa/danos/la/iglesia/la/pastora.html">http://www.diariodecadiz.es/article/cadiz/1457014/estudiante/erasmus/causa/danos/la/iglesia/la/pastora.html</a>  <a href="http://noticias.lainformacion.com/educacion/estudiantes/detenido-un-juven-estudiante-de-erasmus-que-entro-en-una-iglesia-y-rompio-un-crucifijo-del-siglo-xviii_ewHk4HOmpDcwwE01fLmH31/">http://noticias.lainformacion.com/educacion/estudiantes/detenido-un-juven-estudiante-de-erasmus-que-entro-en-una-iglesia-y-rompio-un-crucifijo-del-siglo-xviii_ewHk4HOmpDcwwE01fLmH31/</a>
Victim(s) involved (number / name)	Catholic church
Crime type	3- Damage to property 4- Vandalism 6- Attacks against places of worship
Perpetrator(s) (if known)	Polish Erasmus student
Brief description of incident with bias indicators	A young man entered a church in Cádiz (Andalously), threw to the ground a big wooden cross and broke its two arms. People in the church tried to stop him but he managed to escape.
Bias indicators	1- Witness perception 6- Location indicates bias
Status of the case	Pending trial
Response of local authorities	The young man was arrested soon afterwards and released on parole
Impact on the victim(s) and the community	Newspapers informed that parish priest and church goers were scared

**Chart 3**

Incident	Insulting graffiti on church walls
Date, time, location	5 April Sanabria (Zamora)
Country	Spain
Source of information	<a href="http://www.laopiniondezamora.es/comarcas/2013/04/06/aparecen-pintadas-ofensivas-iglesia-parroquial-asturianos/670396.html">http://www.laopiniondezamora.es/comarcas/2013/04/06/aparecen-pintadas-ofensivas-iglesia-parroquial-asturianos/670396.html</a>
Victim(s) involved (number / name)	Catholic church
Crime type	3- Damage to property 4- Vandalism 6- Attacks against places of worship
Perpetrator(s) (if known)	
Brief description of incident with bias indicators	Insulting <i>graffiti</i> were written on the walls of a church in Sanabria (Zamora)
Bias indicators	2- Comments, written statements and graffiti 6- Location indicates bias
Status of the case	
Response of local authorities	
Impact on the victim(s) and the community	This is just but a small token of this kind of hate crime because, throughout Spain, hundreds of insulting graffiti against Christians or the Church have been written on public walls and specially on church walls, during 2013 ( <a href="http://www.diariosur.es/v/20140107/malaga/nuevos-grafitis-iglesia-contra-20140107.html">http://www.diariosur.es/v/20140107/malaga/nuevos-grafitis-iglesia-contra-20140107.html</a> )

**Chart 4**

Incident	Attempt to burn church
Date, time, location	5 July Vinaroz (Castellón)
Country	Spain
Source of information	<a href="http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2013/07/16/castellon/1373985673.html">http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2013/07/16/castellon/1373985673.html</a>
Victim(s) involved	Catholic church

(number / name)	
Crime type	3- Damage to property 4- Vandalism 6- Attacks against places of worship
Perpetrator(s) (if known)	
Brief description of incident with bias indicators	In July, four people set fire to a church in Vinaroz (Castellón) and were arrested later on by the police. The fire caused many damages to the floor, the furniture and to the church sculptures
Bias indicators	1- Victim perception (burning of churches as an attack on the Catholic Church was very common in the period between 1931 and 1939) 6- Location indicates bias
Status of the case	
Response of local authorities	4 young men were arrested
Impact on the victim(s) and the community	

#### Chart 5

Incident	Bomb in Cathedral
Date, time, location	2 October, Saragossa
Country	Spain
Source of information	<a href="http://www.publico.es/actualidad/481839/detenidos-dos-anarquistas-del-comando-mateo-morral-por-la-bomba-del-pilar">http://www.publico.es/actualidad/481839/detenidos-dos-anarquistas-del-comando-mateo-morral-por-la-bomba-del-pilar</a>
Victim(s) involved (number / name)	Catholic church
Crime type	2- Physical violence 3- Damage to property 4- Vandalism 6- Attacks against places of worship
Perpetrator(s) (if known)	Anarquist group called Mateo Morral
Brief description of incident with bias	A home-made bomb, made with a small gas bottle and two kilograms of gun powder, exploded in the well-known Basilica of El Pilar, in Saragossa,

indicators	at the time it was open to the public, although there were no casualties.
Bias indicators	2- Name of group “Mateo Morral” (anarquists have traditionally attacked the Church in Spain) 4- Organized Hate Groups 6- Location indicates bias
Status of the case	Pending trial
Response of local authorities	Days after the attack, two Chilean men were arrested. They were believed to belong to the same anarchist group which had tried to attack the La Almudena Cathedral in Madrid, the previous February
Impact on the victim(s) and the community	

### Chart 6

Incident	Fire in a church
Date, time, location	20 December Reus (Catalonia)
Country	Spain
Source of information	<a href="http://www.diaridetarragona.com/noticia.php?id=15396">http://www.diaridetarragona.com/noticia.php?id=15396</a>
Victim(s) involved (number / name)	Catholic church
Crime type	2- Physical violence 3- Damage to property 4- Vandalism 6- Attacks against places of worship
Perpetrator(s) (if known)	Anarquist group “Mateo Morral” (a graffiti indicating “free the prisoners” have led to suspicions that they belong to the same anarquist group that attacked the Basilica in Saragossa)
Brief description of incident with bias indicators	A group of people tried to set church in fire in Reus (Catalonia) by burning wheel tyres at the door of the church
Bias indicators	2- Graffiti 4- Organized Hate Groups 6- Location indicates bias
Status of the case	
Response of local	

authorities	
Impact on the victim(s) and the community	

### Chart 7

Incident	Storming into church
Date, time, location	25 December Barcelona
Country	Spain
Source of information	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4V5SbHkKvM">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4V5SbHkKvM</a>
Victim(s) involved (number / name)	People present during the Mass
Crime type	4- Vandalism 6- Attacks against places of worship 7- Threats/threatening behavior
Perpetrator(s) (if known)	
Brief description of incident with bias indicators	On Christmas Eve, a group of about fifty people with banners and posters stormed into a church near Barcelona during the Mass and shouted slogans in favor of abortion and against Christians
Bias indicators	2- Comments and slogans shouted by participants in the action 6- Location indicates bias
Status of the case	
Response of local authorities	
Impact on the victim(s) and the community	

## Physical attacks on christians and members of the Catholic Hierarchy

Chart 8

Incident	Explosive devices were sent to two people
Date, time, location	April, Pamplona and Madrid
Country	Spain
Source of information	<a href="http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/politica/arzobispo-pamplona-paquete-bomba-consolador-2368099">http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/politica/arzobispo-pamplona-paquete-bomba-consolador-2368099</a>
Victim(s) involved (number / name)	A bishop and a school principal
Crime type	2- Physical violence
Perpetrator(s) (if known)	<i>Grupo anticlerical para el fomento del uso del juguete sexual y el Club de artesanos del café para sus nuevos usos</i> (Anti-christian group for the promotion of the use of sexual toys and the Coffee craftsmen club for alternative uses)
Brief description of incident with bias indicators	An anarchist group sent explosive devices concealed into sexual toys to the Bishop of Pamplona (Navarra) and to the Director of a Catholic school (Legionarios de Cristo) in Madrid, in April. The bombs did not explode
Bias indicators	1- Victims were religious personalities 4- Organized Hate Groups
Status of the case	
Response of local authorities	
Impact on the victim(s) and the community	

Chart 9

Incident	Attack on bishop
Date, time, location	2 February Madrid
Country	Spain
Source of information	<a href="http://sevilla.abc.es/sociedad/20140202/rc-activistas-femen-abordan-rouco-201402022137.html">http://sevilla.abc.es/sociedad/20140202/rc-activistas-femen-abordan-rouco-201402022137.html</a>

	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8Ae_0lVQfg">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8Ae_0lVQfg</a>
Victim(s) involved (number / name)	One Bishop
Crime type	2- Physical violence 7- Threatening behavior
Perpetrator(s) (if known)	FEMEN
Brief description of incident with bias indicators	A group of 5 bare breasted women of a group called FEMEN tried to assault the Madrid bishop, Cardinal Rouco Varela, while he was going to visit a parish. The group also insulted the bishop and threw panties stained with red color at him
Bias indicators	1- Identity of victim 6- Location indicates bias (outside a church)
Status of the case	
Response of local authorities	Two people were arrested
Impact on the victim(s) and the community	Many protests have ensued

#### Chart 10

Incident	Continuous insults on the telephone
Date, time, location	October, Palencia
Country	Spain
Source of information	<a href="http://www.diariopalentino.es/noticia/Z321F68C1-A36D-1FDE-0E7D49396C339868/20131010/obispo/denuncia/acoso/traves/correo/electronico/telefono">http://www.diariopalentino.es/noticia/Z321F68C1-A36D-1FDE-0E7D49396C339868/20131010/obispo/denuncia/acoso/traves/correo/electronico/telefono</a>
Victim(s) involved (number / name)	Bishop
Crime type	2- Comments 7- Threats, threatening behavior
Perpetrator(s) (if known)	
Brief description of	The Bishop of Palencia denounced that he was being the object of a

incident with bias indicators	harassment campaign through the telephone and email, with many insults and defamations
Bias indicators	1- (Type of) Victim
Status of the case	
Response of local authorities	
Impact on the victim(s) and the community	

## Anti-religious threats and insults

### Chart 11

Incident	Anti-religious publicity campaign
Date, time, location	May, Galicia
Country	Spain
Source of information	<a href="http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2013/05/10/espana/1368195373.htm">http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2013/05/10/espana/1368195373.htm</a> !
Victim(s) involved (number / name)	
Crime type	8- Other hate incidents
Perpetrator(s) (if known)	Socialist Party
Brief description of incident with bias indicators	The youth branch of the Spanish Socialist Party issued and displayed a publicity poster in favor of abortion (see above for the current attempt of reform polemic) showing a crucified woman –openly mocking Christ on the cross- with the following message: “You have the right to your life. You have the right to choose”
Bias indicators	1- Victim/Witness perception 2- Comments, Written Statements
Status of the case	
Response of local	

authorities	
Impact on the victim(s) and the community	

### Chart 12

Incident	Threats against bishops
Date, time, location	October, Santiago de Compostela (Galicia) and Valladolid
Country	Spain
Source of information	<a href="http://www.outono.net/elentir/2013/10/03/denuncian-a-abortistas-por-incitar-a-la-violencia-contra-la-iglesia-catolica/">http://www.outono.net/elentir/2013/10/03/denuncian-a-abortistas-por-incitar-a-la-violencia-contra-la-iglesia-catolica/</a>
Victim(s) involved (number / name)	
Crime type	7- Threats and threatening behavior
Perpetrator(s) (if known)	
Brief description of incident with bias indicators	At the same time that a lecture on religious persecutions in the world was taking place in Valladolid, many people shouted “ <i>¡Hay que quemar la Conferencia Episcopal!</i> ” (We must burn down the Bishops Conference!) at the doors of the building where the lecture was taking place
Bias indicators	1- Victim/Witness perception 2- Comments
Status of the case	
Response of local authorities	
Impact on the victim(s) and the community	

### Chart 13

Incident	Threatening stickers in walls around the city
Date, time, location	October, Tarragona (Catalonia)
Country	Spain

Source of information	Personal informants
Victim(s) involved (number / name)	
Crime type	7- Threats
Perpetrator(s) (if known)	
Brief description of incident with bias indicators	At the time many martyrs from Tarragona (Catalonia) were going to be beatified, many stickers were displayed in that city with the message: <i>Beatos a los leones</i> (Saints must be thrown to the lions).
Bias indicators	1- Victim/Witness perception 2- Comments
Status of the case	
Response of local authorities	
Impact on the victim(s) and the community	

## Conclusion

As a conclusion to the above referenced offences, see below just a small list of translated tweets with threats of damaging churches and specific threats to individual Bishops, Christians and the Catholic Church.

---



**Paul @pturegano** · 29 de dic.  
**Propongo matar a Rouco Varela** [abc.es/sociedad/20131...](http://abc.es/sociedad/20131...)

[Ver resumen](#)      [Responder](#)   [Retwittear](#)   [★ Favorito](#)   [⋮ Más](#)

“I put forward killing Rouco Varela (Bishop of Madrid)”

<https://twitter.com/pturegano/status/417398643704856576>

---



**Rober Perez (罗伯托) @Robertin23** · 16 de abr. de 2013  
 Cuando vamos a coger las antorchas y vamos a **quemar** todas las iglesias con los **obispos** y curas dentro?? Xq cada dia se lo estan ganando mas.

[Abrir](#)      [Responder](#)   [Retwittear](#)   [★ Favorito](#)   [⋮ Más](#)

“When are we going to get hold of the torches and go burn every church with the bishops and the priests inside? Every day they deserve it more”

<https://twitter.com/Robertin23/status/324250262317432832>



**Siete Catorce** @sietecatorce · 6 h  
[youtube.com/watch?v=qjMtT...](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjMtT...)

Estoy listo para ir a **quemar iglesias**

“I am ready to burn churches”

<https://twitter.com/sietecatorce/status/459242361483431936>



**Ejwi** @Mindodernaer · 20 de abr.  
Yo de mayor quisiera **quemar** todas las **iglesias** del mundo

Abrir

Responder Retwittear Favorito Más

“When I grow up, I would like to burn all the churches in the world”

<https://twitter.com/Mindodernaer/status/457987745190002688>



**Horrorscope** @DennisAlonso · 5 de jun.  
Viva Satanás y el black metal. Me gusta **quemar iglesias** porque la iglesia que más ilumina es la que arde. #TwitteaComoSiFuerasUnSidoso

Abrir

Responder Retwittear Favorito Más

“Long live Satan and black metal. I like burning churches because the church that illuminates more is the one that burns”

<https://twitter.com/DennisAlonso/status/342365788226859009>



**De cuerpo aplanado** @Cucarachis · 17 de may.  
Menos estudiar y más **quemar iglesias**.

Abrir

Responder Retwittear Favorito Más

“Less study and more church-burning”

<https://twitter.com/Cucarachis/status/335308471719297024>



**Romántica Idealista** @vero\_\_pececitoo · 19 de mar.  
Si pudieses ser invisible por un día, ¿qué harías? — **Matar** a todos y cada uno de los **curas** y militantes del PP [ask.fm/a/afke6h14](https://ask.fm/a/afke6h14)

Abrir

Responder Retwittear Favorito Más

“If I could be invisible for a day, what would you do? – Kill every single priest and member of the Conservative Party”

[https://twitter.com/vero\\_\\_pececitoo/status/446285511175708672](https://twitter.com/vero__pececitoo/status/446285511175708672)



**Fran CA** @1frankyCa · 8 de sept.

A quemar el capitalismo hasta sus cimientos y follarnos a todos los **curas** y monjas y con sus tripas **colgar** al papa, [youtube.com/watch?feature=...](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=...)

Abrir

Responder Retwittear Favorito Más

“Let us burn capitalism to its foundations and fuck every priest and nun and with their guts let us hang the pope”.

<https://twitter.com/1frankyCa/status/376518988726939648>



**Miguelon Miguelon** @MiguelonMiguelo · 20 de abr. de 2013

¿Qué más nos hace falta escuchar para salir a la calle y prender fuego a todas las iglesias? Ah! Y **colgar** a todos ls **curas** #elpoderdelaiglesia

Abrir

Responder Retwittear Favorito Más

“What else do we need to hear in order to go out on the street and set fire to all the churches? Ah!, and hang all priests”

<https://twitter.com/MiguelonMiguelo/status/325735964112732160>



**Nai** @NaiDelelis · 18 de abr.

Quiero salir a **matar católicos** creyentes practicantes, asi justifican el sufrimiento de jesus por eso y no por "no comer carne "

Abrir

Responder Retwittear Favorito Más

“I want to go out to kill practising believing catholics, this way they justify Jesus suffering, not for not eating meat”

<https://twitter.com/NaiDelelis/status/457200252131762176>



**La banda de lexo** @LaBandaDeLexo · 28 de mar. de 2013

¿Y si aprovechamos que mañana es Viernes Santo y salimos a **matar católicos**?

Since tomorrow is Holy Friday, how about going out and kill catholics?

<https://twitter.com/LaBandaDeLexo/status/317419505221509121>



**Macnulti** @TheOldMacnulti · 19 de mar. de 2013

yo estoy aquí terminando unas cosas pero si se organizan para salir a **matar católicos** y quemar iglesias avisen q me sumo

Abrir

Responder Retwittear Favorito Más

<https://twitter.com/TheOldMacnulti/status/314051392476164096>