

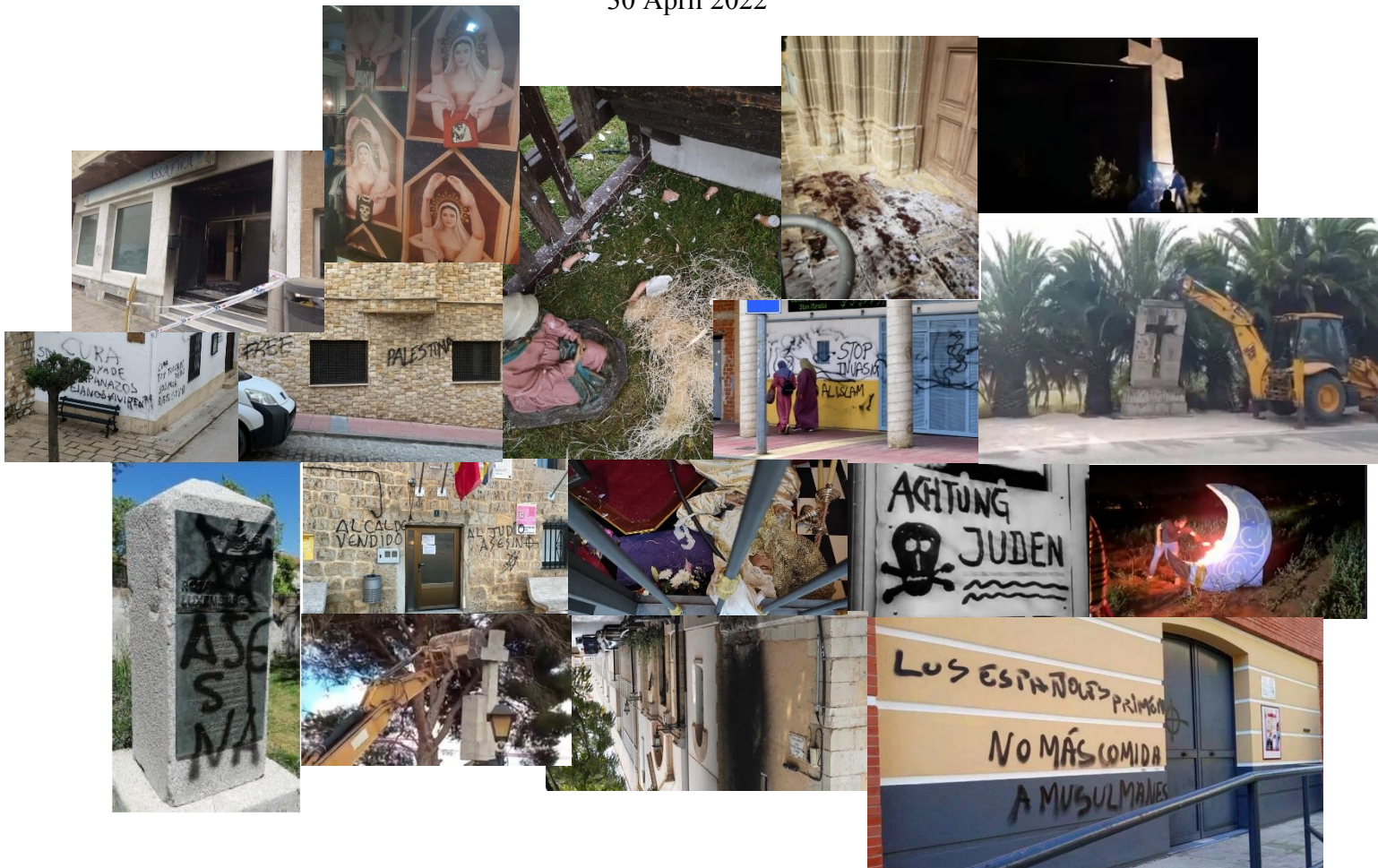


Civil Society Contributions to OSCE-ODIHR annual reports:

Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region (Spain)

HCR 2021 *Observatorio para la libertad religiosa y de conciencia* (OLRC-Spanish observatory of freedom of religion and conscience)

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Threats, acts of vandalism and offensive graffiti painted on places of worship and public places, as well as in social media in Spain, during 2021

María García (olreligiosa@libertadreligiosa.es)
President of OLRC *Observatorio para la Libertad Religiosa y de Conciencia*
Nicolás Zambrana-Tévar LLM, PhD (nicolaszambrantevar@hotmail.com)
Associate Professor KIMEP University Law School (Kazakhstan)

The Spanish Observatory of Freedom of Religion and Conscience (OLRC)

OLRC is an association registered under Spanish law in 2006 with the Spanish Ministry of Home Affairs (*Ministerio del Interior*, N. 588984). OLRC aims to raise awareness about the human right and constitutional right to live in society and participate in public life without being attacked, harassed or discriminated on account of ethical or religious views and beliefs.

In addition to reporting attacks on religious freedom, OLRC organises seminars, training sessions and conferences on religious freedom and collaborates with the media and with other similar civil society organisations. OLRC has also been collaborating with OSCE-ODIHR for a number of years.

See OLRC's full report of attacks against religious freedom, secularist and anti-religious behaviour by individuals, organizations and political parties (in Spanish) (<http://libertadreligiosa.es/category/ataques/>).

Reporting methodology and the state of religious freedom in Spain in 2021

The 2022 report prepared by OLRC focuses on hate crimes in Spain against Christians of different denominations, Jews and Muslims, during 2021. Our reporting chart is adapted to the guidelines suggested by ODIHR. This includes information on the date of the incident, location (town, province and/or region), source of information (newspapers, social media, etc), brief description of the incident, indicators of anti-religious bias in the attack and useful additional information.

During 2021 we have witnessed, as in 2020, a significant number of actions undertaken by feminist groups who, on and around International Women's Day (8 March) organize peaceful but also sometimes threatening demonstrations, where insults and threats to members of the Catholic Church are chanted, where effigies of bishops are burnt, and churches and other church buildings are attacked in various ways.

Attacks on religious monuments such as stone crosses are increasingly common. Sometimes these crosses are removed by state authorities and sometimes this is done in secret by extremist groups. A common feature of such removals and/or destruction of religious monuments is the wrong and prejudiced identification of religious symbols with fascism and with the Spanish Civil War.

It must also be taken into account that attacks on churches and religious buildings, including thefts and graffiti are so common in Spain that the media does not report many of them. OLRC has to rely on witnesses who collaborate with us as well as on social media. Therefore, it is to be assumed that the actual number of attacks on religious property is much higher. Furthermore, such attacks may be economically very harmful because they harm or destroy extremely old and valuable works of art.

We also bring again your attention to the fact that many acts of aggression are verbal in nature and cannot be reported here, in accordance with ODIHR's guidelines. A certain degree of monitoring, not only of mainstream media but also of social media is needed in

order to have a clear picture of the alarming atmosphere of verbal aggression and discrimination to which religious groups are often subjected in Spain. Such acts and atmosphere leads to and may lead in the future to acts of physical aggression against believers and against places of worship, in the same way that acts of aggression against certain groups are often preceded by various kinds of extremely insulting and discriminatory acts which may in themselves not be of a criminal nature. This year, insults against Christians, Christian public figures and Christian politicians, in the media or even in Parliament, have been common.

OLRC is obviously aware of the importance of freedom of expression, freedom of the press and of the different limits that the legislation of OSCE countries establish for such freedom. However, there seems to be a double standard with respect to freedom of expression. The feminist demonstrations that we report – and many more – seem to be protected by this constitutional freedom but, at the same time and during 2022, many religious monuments have been removed, arguing that they had political connotations which, apparently, are not protected by freedom of expression. Even more reprehensible, in this regard, is a new law which criminalizes demonstrations in front of abortion clinics (*Ley Orgánica 4/2022, de 12 de abril*).

Report sections

- 1- Physical attacks and violence against believers
- 2- Attacks, damage to property and vandalism against places of worship
- 3- Threats / threatening acts & humiliating behaviour against believers

Section 1- Physical attacks and violence against believers

Case n. 1

Date of incident	1 September 2021
Country, location	Madrid
Source	https://www.eldiario.es/desalambre/joven-frances-denuncia-agresion-racista-madrid-crees-ala_1_8263178.amp.html
Incident description	Physical aggression against a Muslim
Bias indicators	Victim was asked by unknown individuals if he believed in Allah before they attacked him
Additional information	Victim was a 47 year old French national of Algerian origin. He was in downtown Madrid with some friends when he was attacked. He tried to defend himself and afterwards entered into restaurant to seek protection. The aggressors stayed outside, calling him out. Finally the aggressors left in a taxi

Case n. 2

Date of incident	27 September 2021
Country, location	Palma de Mallorca (Balearic Islands)
Source	https://www.cope.es/emisoras/illes-balears/baleares/mallorca/noticias/sacerdotes-palma-terrorizados-por-las-agresiones-una-mujer-que-les-acusa-ser-anticristo-20211228_1701456
Incident description	Repeated aggressions and death threats to Catholic priests (Antoni Gómez and others)
Bias indicators	Victims were Catholic priests and church goers
Additional information	The aggressor is woman who has been arrested several times and who may have a psychiatric condition

Case n. 3

Date of incident	29 September 2021
Country, location	Albalat del Sorells (Valencia)
Source	https://www.hortanoticias.com/albalat-sorells-presunta-agresion-excalcalde-vicente-almenar-parroco/
Incident description	Physical aggression to Catholic priest
Bias indicators	Aggression took place inside a church
Additional information	Argument started because cell phone of aggressor rang during mass and continued after mass

Section 2- Attacks, damage to property and vandalism against places of worship

Case n. 4

Date of incident	6 January 2021
Country, location	Pino Montano (Seville, Andalucía)
Source	https://okdiario.com/andalucia/parroquia-sevilla-amanece-pintadas-espanoles-primero-stop-musulmanes-6662008
Incident description	Islamophobic graffiti in Catholic church which said “Spaniards first. Stop giving food to Muslims”
Bias indicators	Islamophobic message and religious nature of place
Additional information	<i>Unidas Podemos</i> (left wing party) announced a demonstration in protest

Case n. 5

Date of incident	19 January 2021
Country, location	Alcalá de Henares (Madrid)
Source	https://www.dream-alcala.com/unos-ladrones-profanan-san-juan-de-avila-y-roban-el-sagrario-de-la-iglesia/

Incident description	Tabernacle and other religious objects were stolen from a Catholic parish (<i>San Juan de Ávila</i>). Church sustained damages
Bias indicators	Religious place where theft took place. Religious nature of objects stolen. Possible additional economic motivation of theft
Additional information	

Case n. 6

Date of incident	19 January 2021
Country, location	Aguilar de la Frontera (Córdoba, Andalucía)
Source	https://cordopolis.eldiario.es/cordoba-hoy/ayuntamiento-aguilar-retira-cruz-caidos_1_7137420.html
Incident description	Municipality removes religious monument (stone cross)
Bias indicators	Religious symbol in front of a Catholic convent
Additional information	Newspaper refers to cross as a monument to the fallen during the Spanish Civil War. Left-wing governments often remove such monuments for their alleged political connotations

Case n. 7

Date of incident	21 February 2021
Country, location	San Javier (Murcia)
Source	https://amp.ultimahora.es/noticias/nacional/2021/02/21/1240611/incendian-mezquita-san-javier-murcia-donde-pintaron-muerte-islam.html
Incident description	Attempt to burn Mosque (<i>Assafwa</i> prayer center). A graffiti on the wall of the attacked mosque said “Death to Islam”
Bias indicators	Religious nature of attacked place
Additional information	A neighbour called the police and the firefighters quickly quenched the fire. The municipality has condemned the aggression

Case n. 8

Date of incident	24 February 2021
Country, location	Baeza (Jaén, Andalucía)
Source	https://www.cope.es/emisoras/andalucia/jaen-provincia/jaen/amp/noticias/pintada-una-parroquia-baeza-cura-tus-campanas-sois-peores-que-covid-20210224_1156766
Incident description	Graffiti in Catholic parish (<i>El Salvador</i>) saying “Priest, you and your bells are worse than COVID”
Bias indicators	Religious place and content of graffiti. Perception of church goes
Additional information	Parish priest reported the event to the police

Case n. 9

Date of incident	6 March 2021
Country, location	San Vicente de Montal (Barcelona, Catalonia)
Source	https://twitter.com/Juanerpf/status/1368258939335376901?s=20
Incident description	Removal of stone cross from public square by state authorities
Bias indicators	Religious nature of monument removed
Additional information	No justification was given for the removal of the cross

Case n. 10

Date of incident	7 March 2021
Country, location	Berga (Barcelona, Catalonia)
Source	https://germinansgerminabit.blogspot.com/2021/03/ya-no-solo-senalan-las-iglesias.html
Incident description	Fire and graffiti on several Catholic churches
Bias indicators	Religious nature of places attacked. Identity of aggressors (feminist group)

Additional information	The night before 8 March (International Women's day), a feminist group called <i>Xarxa de les bruixes</i> (network of witches) marched across the town with torches and spraying purple paint (the colour used by feminists in Spain) on the walls of churches. They also set up bonfires at the door of several churches
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Case n. 11

Date of incident	7 March 2021
Country, location	Berga (Barcelona, Catalonia)
Source	https://germinansgerminabit.blogspot.com/2021/03/ya-no-solo-senalan-las-iglesias.html
Incident description	Anti-religious graffiti in a shop which sold religious images (<i>Cerería Sant-Roc</i>)
Bias indicators	Religious connotations of attacked place
Additional information	The night before 8 March (International Women's Day), the feminist group <i>Xarxa de les Bruixes</i> (network of witches) threw purple paint (colour of feminist groups in Spain) at the shop and wrote "guilty"

Case n. 12

Date of incident	1 April 2021
Country, location	León (Castilla y León)
Source	https://www.religiondigital.org/diocesis/Cerrado-expropiadores-protesta-templos-Leon_0_2328067190.html
Incident description	Unknown individuals affixed sealing police cords to the doors of Catholic churches. They also placed banners saying "closed for homophobia" and "closed for misogyny"
Bias indicators	Religious place
Additional information	

Case n. 13

Date of incident	12 May 2021
Country, location	Ceuta
Source	http://ceutatv.com/art/35578/aparecen-pintadas-en-la-sinagoga-de-ceuta
Incident description	Graffiti on Jewish Synagogue saying “Free Palestine” and “Allahu Akhbar” (God is great in Arabic)
Bias indicators	Religious place attacked. Content of message
Additional information	

Case n. 14

Date of incident	18 May 2021
Country, location	Málaga (Andalucía)
Source	https://twitter.com/EncarnacionMlg/status/1394560040749654017
Incident description	Theft of religious objects and vandalism in Catholic chapel
Bias indicators	Religious nature of place attacked. Religious objects stolen and vandalized
Additional information	

Case n. 15

Date of incident	7 July 2021
Country, location	Cabezo de Torres (Murcia)
Source	https://www.laverdad.es/murcia/ciudad-murcia/lanzan-cabeza-cerdo-20210707115336-nt.html
Incident description	Offensive graffiti in Muslim mosque saying “No to Islam”, “Stop invasion”. A Spanish flag with the phrase “Spanish sovereignty cannot be negotiated” was also painted. A pig’s head had also been left at the place

Bias indicators	Religious nature of place attacked. Contents of messages
Additional information	The municipality condemned the attack

Case n. 16

Date of incident	2 September 2021
Country, location	Pobla de Vallbona (Valencia)
Source	https://abogadoscristianos.es/abogados-cristianos-pide-al-ayuntamiento-de-la-pobla-de-vallbona-que-reponga-el-monumento-en-honor-al-vicario-camarena/
Incident description	The municipality removes a religious monument to a Catholic martyr
Bias indicators	Religious nature of monument removed
Additional information	The removal may have also been politically motivated because the martyr honoured by the monument was Francisco Camarena, a Catholic priest who was murdered by left-wing militias in 1936, during the Spanish Civil War

Case n. 17

Date of incident	5 September 2021
Country, location	Santander (Cantabria)
Source	https://www.jovenescatolicos.es/2021/09/08/profanan-una-iglesia-en-santander/
Incident description	Theft of religious objects in Catholic parish (<i>Parroquia de la Bien Aparecida</i>)
Bias indicators	Religious nature of attacked place and stolen objects
Additional information	The parish priest confirmed that none of the stolen objects had any value so he believed that the motivation of the theft was sacrilegious

Case n. 18

Date of incident	6 September 2021
Country, location	Morcín (Asturias)
Source	https://www.lne.es/cuencas/2021/09/06/vandalismo-mojones-capillas-monsacro-56984242.html
Incident description	Offensive graffiti and damages to the Catholic chapel of <i>Monsacro</i>
Bias indicators	Religious nature of place and message of graffiti
Additional information	Some of the graffiti said “shame on church”

Case n. 19

Date of incident	6 September 2021
Country, location	Córdoba (Andalucía)
Source	https://twitter.com/ErmitasCordoba/status/1434908967658995713
Incident description	Grffiti in Catholic convent (<i>Siervas de María</i>). Some of the graffiti said “Get out”
Bias indicators	Religious nature of attacked place and message of graffiti
Additional information	

Case n. 20

Date of incident	9 September 2021
Country, location	Bunyola (Balearic Islands)
Source	https://www.ultimahora.es/noticias/part-forana/2021/09/09/1299171/bunyola-retira-cruz-caidos-1.html
Incident description	Removal of cross monument
Bias indicators	Religious nature of monument removed
Additional information	The cross was removed by the Socialist government, arguing that it was a monument to the fallen in the Spanish Civil War

Case n. 21

Date of incident	10 October 2021
Country, location	Illescas (Toledo, Castilla La-Mancha)
Source	https://www.aciprensa.com/noticias/en-domingo-roban-y-profanan-la-eucaristia-en-convento-de-religiosas-de-clausura-60324
Incident description	Theft of religious objects and consecrated hosts in Catholic convent (<i>Hermanas de María Stella Matutina</i>)
Bias indicators	Religious nature of stolen objects and attacked place
Additional information	Some of the hosts were recovered in the forest. It was reported that similar events are common in that town every year, around Halloween (1 November)

Case n. 22

Date of incident	11 October 2021
Country, location	Lemona (Vizcaya, Basque Country)
Source	https://www.cronicavasca.com/politica/juventudes-sortu-derriban-cruz-franquista-pena-lemona_547062_102.html https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=887849638824061&_rdr
Incident description	Monument of cross is torn down
Bias indicators	Religious nature of monument attacked
Additional information	The attackers belonged to “Ernai”, the youth of the Basque separatist party “Sortu”. The huge cross was torn down with cables. The attackers recorded it in a video which was later published in the internet

Case n. 23

Date of incident	19 October 2021
Country, location	Vinalesa (Valencia)

Source	https://www.esdiario.com/municipios/407495735/polemica-derribo-cruz-asesinados-guerra-civil.html
Incident description	Monument of the cross is removed
Bias indicators	Religious nature of monument attacked
Additional information	The cross commemorated eight martyrs from that town, murdered during the Spanish civil war. One of them had been beatified by Pope John Paul II. The municipality removed the cross arguing that it was a Fascist monument

Case n. 24

Date of incident	21 October 2021
Country, location	Son Servera (Balearic Islands)
Source	https://www.mallorcadiario.com/retirada-cruz-caidos-son-servera-cumplimiento-ley-memoria-historica
Incident description	Monument of a cross is removed
Bias indicators	Religious nature of monument removed
Additional information	The municipality removed the cross arguing that it was a Fascist monument to the fallen of the Spanish Civil War

Case n. 25

Date of incident	29 October 2021
Country, location	Castellón (Valencia)
Source	https://www.tradicionviva.es/2021/10/29/incendian-una-iglesia-en-castellon-tras-una-campana-cristianofoba-de-la-izquierda-local/
Incident description	Attempt to burn Catholic church (<i>San Vicente Ferrer</i>)
Bias indicators	Religious nature of place attacked
Additional information	It was a church of XVI century of great artistic value

Case n. 26

Date of incident	11 December 2021
Country, location	Málaga (Andalucía)
Source	https://www.laopiniondemalaga.es/semana-santa/2021/12/11/aparecen-pintadas-san-felipe-neri-60550649.html
Incident description	Offensive graffiti in Catholic church (<i>San Felipe Neri</i>) saying “Death to pedophiles”. Another graffiti over a mosaic representing Jesus carrying the cross said “You are sacrilegious”
Bias indicators	Religious nature of building attacked. Content of message
Additional information	The church is considered a national monument by law

Case n. 27

Date of incident	18 December 2021
Country, location	Andoáin (Guipúzcoa, Basque Country)
Source	https://www.noticiasdegipuzkoa.eus/actualidad/sucesos/2021/12/18/derriban-cruz-monte-buruntza/1168163.html
Incident description	Monument of the cross is torn down
Bias indicators	Religious nature of monument attacked
Additional information	Unknown individuals tore down the cross of Mount Buruntza. They used specialist equipment because the monument was very big

Case n. 28

Date of incident	28 December 2021
Country, location	Cuevas del Valle (Ávila, Castilla y León)
Source	https://www.larazon.es/espana/20220104/7cakmqqdgnfbllp5wymb2sc5sa.html
Incident description	Monument of cross is torn down
Bias indicators	Religious nature of monument attacked

Additional information	The cross commemorated the torture and murder of Damián Gómez Jiménez, a Catholic priest during the Spanish Civil War. The newspaper informs that the unknown individuals who did it belonged to an anti-Francoist association
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Section 3- Threats / threatening acts & humiliating behaviour against believers

Case n. 29

Date of incident	20 January 2021
Country, location	Madrid
Source	https://www.periodistadigital.com/politica/autonomias/20210120/celebracion-progre-explosion-centro-madrid-curas-usen-impulso-llegar-cielo-noticia-689404420626/
Incident description	After a gas explosion killed several priests in a building in Madrid, some people posted messages in social media like “A few priests less” or “three priests less in Madrid thanks to the explosion”
Bias indicators	Threatening references to how grateful they were for the death of Catholic ministers
Additional information	

Case n. 30

Date of incident	15 February 2021
Country, location	Madrid
Source	https://www.lamarea.com/2021/02/15/enemigo-siempre-mismo-judio-300-neonazis-homenajean-espanoles-lucharon-hitler/
Incident description	Neo-Nazi anti-Jewish demonstration
Bias indicators	Anti-Jewish slogans and demonstration organized by “ <i>Juventud patriota</i> ” (Patriotic youth), a neo-Nazi youth organization

Additional information	Among the statements made, participants in the demonstration referred to Jews as “the enemy” and to their obligation to fight against them
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Case n. 31

Date of incident	14 September 2021
Country, location	Barcelona (Catalonia)
Source	https://www.larazon.es/cataluna/20210918/e2clhol2j5gupftdlgwmxzubqy.html
Incident description	Young Muslim girl insulted for wearing a <i>hijab</i> in the subway
Bias indicators	Victim could easily be identified as Muslim believer
Additional information	

Case n. 32

Date of incident	9 January 2021
Country, location	Madrid
Source	https://okdiario.com/madrid/ex-diputada-iu-anima-chicas-entrar-sin-ropa-iglesias-derruir-estatuas-6671914
Incident description	Former MP of <i>Izquierda Unida</i> (left wing party) glorifies and encourages vandalism against churches and against religious monuments
Bias indicators	Obvious references against Catholicism
Additional information	In the course of the workshop “Dialogue of Marxist Women”, Marga Ferré praised actions by members of Femen like storming naked into churches. She also said how pleased she was that religious monuments were torn down

Case n. 33

Date of incident	28 January 2021
Country, location	Spain
Source	https://elpais.com/espana/2021-01-28/twitter-cierra-la-cuenta-de-vox-por-incitar-al-odio-contra-los-musulmanes.html
Incident description	Various anti-Muslim statements of <i>Vox</i> (right wing party)
Bias indicators	Strong criticisms of Islam in Spain and of how it is tolerated by Spanish authorities
Additional information	Twitter closed the account of <i>Vox</i> party

Case n. 34

Date of incident	8 March 2021
Country, location	Solsona (Lleida, Catalonia)
Source	https://www.religionenlibertad.com/polemicas/612187623/violencia-feminista-iglesias-cada-8m.html
Incident description	Threatening acts before the residence of the Catholic bishop
Bias indicators	Place of the attack and content of the messages sent
Additional information	During the night of 8 March (International Women's Day), a demonstration of around 30 women threw pamphlets and dirty liquids before the residence of the Catholic bishop

Case n. 35

Date of incident	14 May 2021
Country, location	Madrid
Source	https://observatorioantisemitismo.fcje.org/monolito-y-mural-dedicados-a-risa-luxemburgo-aravaca-madrid/
Incident description	Graffiti saying "Jewess murderer" on several monuments dedicated to Rose Luxemburg (German revolutionary)

Bias indicators	Jewish identity of historical figure
Additional information	

Case n. 36

Date of incident	11 September 2021
Country, location	Valencia
Source	https://twitter.com/Alvisepf/status/1436412786079408130 https://www.espanaesvoz.es/2021/09/10/alvise-perez-quema-la-media-luna-que-no-se-quemo-en-las-fallas/
Incident description	Popular influencer (Luis Alvise Pérez) burns a Muslim crescent moon and brags about it on twitter
Bias indicators	Religious symbol
Additional information	Previously, a group of Muslims had prevented the burning of a similar crescent during the festivities of the city of Valencia (<i>Fallas</i>)

Case n. 37

Date of incident	2 December 2021
Country, location	Spain
Source	https://www.outono.net/elentir/2021/12/02/antisemitas-atacan-a-un-diputado-de-vox-por-felicitar-el-januca-a-la-comunidad-judia/
Incident description	Politicians of Vox (right wing party) congratulate Jews on the <i>Hanukkah</i> and receive multiple and threatening insults on twitter for doing it
Bias indicators	<i>Hanukkah</i> is Jewish feast day
Additional information	Some of the insults suggested the desire that the politicians of <i>Vox</i> should go to <i>Auschwitz</i>

Case n. 38

Date of incident	6 December 2021
Country, location	Castrillo Mota de Judíos (Burgos, Castilla y León)
Source	https://www.larazon.es/castilla-y-leon/20211206/ebidicfaffh7rk4rplkx7q622q.html
Incident description	Graffiti insulting the town mayor, accusing him of being favourable to Jews
Bias indicators	Anti-Semitic symbols in the graffiti like a crossed star of David
Additional information	Some of the insults called the mayor “friend of murderous Jews”

Case n. 39

Date of incident	25 December 2021
Country, location	Cuenca (Castilla-La Mancha)
Source	https://www.cope.es/religion/hoy-en-dia/noticias/indignacion-las-redes-despues-que-robaran-varias-figuras-belen-cuenca-delito-odio-20211228_1701086
Incident description	Scene of the nativity vandalized
Bias indicators	Religious significance of the scene and the Christmas time
Additional information	Several religious images of the scene were destroyed

Case n. 40

Date of incident	28 December 2021
Country, location	Madrid
Source	https://www.elconfidencialdigital.com/articulo/vivir/tension-concentracion-favor-aborto-vamos-quemar-conferencia-episcopal/20211228131355326606.html
Incident description	A demonstration of feminists chants slogans threatening to burn the Spanish episcopal conference

Bias indicators	Religious identity of the threatened institution
Additional information	On 28 December it is common that pro-life groups organize demonstrations in front of abortionist clinics. The members of the feminist group had organized a counter-demonstration at the clinic that day