News 19 November 2026 | English article

Attacks on Christians in Europe Jump 44% to 2,465 Cases

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Like a coldness"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Anti-Christian hate crimes and incidents across Europe reached 2,465 in 2025, according to the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians in Europe, known as OIDAC Europe. Attacks on individuals involving physical violence, threats or harassment rose 44 percent to 395, up from 274 in 2024. France recorded the highest national total, with 843 incidents.

Ashur Sarnaya had already fled once. The Assyrian Christian left Iraq after Islamist persecution, rebuilt his life in France, and spent his evenings livestreaming Christian messages to anyone who would listen.

Then he was stabbed to death in Lyon. His name sits in the new report as one of the cases that numbers alone cannot carry - a man who escaped danger in one country and found it again in another, in the middle of a livestream.

The report, published on 18 November 2026, is the Vienna-based organisation's annual count of what Christians face across the continent. It combines national goverment statistics with data from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, using the highest available figure for each country so cases are not double-counted. OIDAC Europe warns the figures are not a complete count - many incidents go unreported, and police record crimes differently from one country to the next.

France Records 843 Anti-Christian Incidents In 2025

France stands alone at the top of the list. The 843 incidents reported by the French goverment in 2025 marked a 9 percent increase on the previous year.

Behind that national total, the report found offences against individuals rose 70 percent in a single year. Physical violence against Christians doubled. Attacks on clergy and other church officials quadrupled.

The pressure reaches into ordinary worship. Disruptions of church services and direct threats against worshippers in France rose by 86 percent, according to the figures cited in the report.

Pastor Tim Knickerbocker, who has served in Limoges for 55 years, told CBN the spiritual atmosphere feels "like a coldness" and that the church lives "under a cloud". Evangelical Christians of all kinds together make up only about 0.6 Percent of the French population, he said.

Pastor Dorothée Rajiah leads Paris Christian Centre in a heavily Muslim part of the French capital. When her church told the authorities it wanted to display a cross on its building, she said officials advised extra security and bulletproof windows.

France is not an outlier in the data. It is the epicentre.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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