Cases of Religious Freedom Violation in Poland in Reference to Christians in 2019

Report Commissioned by the Institute of Justice
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Introduction

In Poland there is an increase in various forms of attacks on Christians because of their religious affiliation. In 2019 a series of acts of vandalism could be observed in the form of destroyed or damaged monuments, roadside figures, churches and other objects, as well as numerous desecrations of persons and symbols which are sacred for Christians. Acts of aggression directed against clergy have become almost commonplace. They ended with assaulting, ridiculing, parodying and discriminating Christians in public space (in real life as well as on the Internet).

The following report presents cases of violation of the right to religious freedom in Poland in regard to Christians of all denominations. They are divided into four categories reflecting physical attacks on places of worship, attacks on images and religious symbols, attacks on clergy and laity, and broadly understood hate speech. The report covers the period from January to December 2019.

The cases documented in the report have been obtained through systematic research of websites, messengers and social media. In the first stage, information about the act and about the perpetrators was collected, and in the final stage the legal consequences of the act were added provided that they were available and published. The verification of the content of the report consisted in confirming their authenticity in several independent sources. The report does not include all violations of the right to religious freedom of Christians in Poland in 2019, but only indicates the scale of the problem. The cases listed in the report are presented in tables, followed by the number in a given group, the nature of the act with the date of the event (and if it was not established, the date of publication of the information), a brief description of the event, and specification of the perpetrator of the act (if determined), the source from which the information was obtained, together with the date of access to it, the status of the case, i.e. actions taken in relation to the perpetrator, and a photo with the place and date of its publication. The report ends with a numerical summary and conclusions.

Physical Attacks on Places of Worship

1. Attack on the Church of St. Nicholas in Świebodzice
Date: 25/26 February 2019
Description of the event: An unknown person smashed stained glass windows installed a year ago in the Church of St. Nicholas in Świebodzice. In addition, he crashed grave lanterns in the church square.
Perpetrator: an unidentified perpetrator.
2. Devastation of the Church of St. Maximilian Kolbe in Konin

Date: 11/12 June 2019

Description of the event:

The perpetrator destroyed the door wings of the Church of St. Maximilian Kolbe, smashed the protective glass in a display case with announcements, grave lanterns, flower beds and a monument. The perpetrator cut off the hand of figurine of St. Maximilian Kolbe, patron of the parish. An inscription “Jacob, give back” was smeared with blood on the church door.

Perpetrator: man, 22

Source: https://konin.naszemiasto.pl/wandalizm-atak-na-kosciol-sw-maksymiliana-w-koninie/ar/c1-5164475 (access date: 12.06.2019)

Status of the case: The perpetrator was arrested by the police. He faces a prison term of between three months and five years.

Photos:

Source: https://konin.naszemiasto.pl/wandalizm-atak-na-kosciol-sw-maksymiliana-w-koninie/ga/c1-5164475/zd/42672589 (access date: 12.06.2019)
3. Stealing cash in the church in Janówka
Date: 4 July 2019
Description of the event: A 37-year-old man entered the church in Janówka under the pretext of drinking water and stole 600 zloty. The money was in the sacristy, in a drawer.
Perpetrator: man, 37.
Status of the case: Perpetrator detained by the police.

4. Profanation of the municipal cemetery in Widzew
Date: 20 July 2019
Description of the event: Two 14-year-olds switched lanterns and flowers on graves and photographed themselves in various poses at and in the immediate vicinity of the tombstones. In addition, they took the cross found in the alley of the cemetery and abandoned it elsewhere in the same cemetery. Photos from the controversial session were posted by one of them on the Internet portal, along with a comment saying: “(...) we don't give a fuck what you may think”
Perpetrator: two teenage girls, 14.
Status of the case: The perpetrators heard allegations of insults and looting of the burial ground.

5. Destruction of the interior of the Church of Sacred Heart of Jesus in Suchy Las
Date: 21 July 2019
Description of the event: In the evening profanation took place in the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Suchy Las near Poznań. The woman first smashed the windows and then entered the church. She knocked over the cross and Easter candle. She ripped off the tablecloth from the altar, tore announcements, destroyed candles and flower pots. She also wanted to damage the tabernacle, but she failed to break through the security.
Perpetrator: woman, 31

[*] Photo 1: I'M WAITING FOR YOUR DRAMATIC REACTIONS! Photo 2. Dear all, give yourselves a break from phrases like "pathetic", "morons", "pathology" etc., cos' we don't give a fuck what you may think. Kisses.
6. Profanation in the Church of Peace in Świdnica

Date: 30 July 2019
Description of the event: The perpetrator entered the graveyard of the Church of Peace in Świdnica (Dolnośląskie) and painted the inscriptions on the 18th-century tombstone.
Perpetrator: Unidentified
Status of the case: No information

7. Devastation of the Church of St. Andrew Bobola in Szczecin

Date: 25 August 2019
Description of the event: The perpetrators destroyed the church in Pocztowa Street in Szczecin, belonging to the parish of St. Andrew Bobola in the care of Jesuits. They painted the inside and outside of the church walls and the pews.
Perpetrator: Unidentified
Source: https://radioszczecin.pl/1,393463,wandale-zdewastowali-kosciol-w-centrum-szczecina&s=1&si=1&sp=1 (access date: 25.08.2019)
8. Breaking into the presbytery in Toruń
Date: 28/29 August 2019
Description of the event: The perpetrator under the influence of alcohol broke into one of the presbytery in Toruń. After the police officers arrived, they found a sleeping burglar on the presbytery’s kitchen floor.
Perpetrator: man, 21
Source: https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/toruń-wlamal-sie-na-plebanie-i-zasnal-6419184800229505a (access date: 30.08.2019)
Status of the case: The man (after sobering up) was charged with attempted burglary. He faces up to 10 years in prison.
Photos: None

9. Devastation of the church in Olecko
Date: 14/15 September 2019
Description of the event: The perpetrator sprayed inscriptions and drawings at the Church of Holy Mary the Queen of Poland in Olecko in Masuria. Black spray drawings and inscriptions “Catholicism deceives” and “do not deceive” appeared on the main door and facade of the church and on the walls surrounding the church.
Perpetrator: man, 23.
Status of the case: The detained heard charges of offending religious feelings and the destruction of property.
10. Devastation of fence elements of the Cathedral of St. Michael Archangel and St. Florian the Martyr in Warsaw

**Date:** 1 October 2019

**Description of the event:** At the entrance to the Warsaw-Praga cathedral on the fence elements appeared swastika-like signs and offensive inscriptions.

**Perpetrator:** Unidentified

**Source:** [https://www.dorzeczy.pl/kraj/115782/katedra-warszawsko-praska-padla-ofiara-wandalii-jestesmy-swiadkami-czestszych-atakow-na-kosciol.html (access date: 01.10.2019)]

**Status of the case:** No information

**Photos:**

Source: [https://www.dorzeczy.pl/kraj/115782/katedra-warszawsko-praska-padla-ofiara-wandalii-jestesmy-swiadkami-czestszych-atakow-na-kosciol.html (access date: 01.10.2019)]

[¹] Do not deceive. In Polish this text is ambiguous: it can mean “lead not”, which is from “lead us not into temptation” (Lord’s Prayer). “Nie wódź” in Polish is not a common sentence and is associated strongly with this prayer.

[²] Catholicism deceives.
### 11. Theft in the Church of St. Brother Albert in Zglobice

**Date:** 2 November 2019  
**Description of the event:** The perpetrators entered an open church and broke into a votive display case. They took five devotional items from it: a gold chain and silver votive hearts.  
**Perpetrator:** Unidentified  
**Source:**  
- https://www.tarnow.net.pl/articles/s/i/265713 (access date: 08.11.2019)  
**Status of the case:** The case was reported to the police. Perpetrators may face up to 10 years in prison.  
**Photos:** None

### 12. Burglary in the Church of Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Łęka Wielka

**Date:** 4/6 November 2019  
**Description of the event:** The perpetrators forced the door to the sacristy. They got into a safe, from where they stole goblets and a reliquary. The value of the stolen items amounted to approx. 15,000 zł.  
**Perpetrator:** Unidentified  
**Source:**  
**Status of the case:** The case was reported to the police.  
**Photos:** None

### 13. Breaking the glass in the door of the Church of St. Anna in Chalupy

**Date:** 22 November 2019  
**Description of the event:** Before 8.00 a.m. in Chalupy at Bogumińska Street, a man smashed a window in the side door of the church with his hand, causing losses of several hundred złoty.  
**Perpetrator:** man, 48.  
**Source:**  
- https://www.naszraciborz.pl/site/art/1/0/77710 (access date: 25.11.2019)  
**Status of the case:** Perpetrator detained by the police. He faces up to five years in prison.  
**Photos:** None

### 14. Theft of relics from the Church of St. Martin in Piława Górna

**Date:** 16/17 December 2019  
**Description of the event:** At night, someone broke into the Church of St. Martin and stole, among others, two reliquaries.  
**Perpetrator:** Man, 19  
**Source:**  
**Status of the case:** The perpetrator detained by the police heard charges of burglary. He confessed to the theft he was accused of. He faces up to 10 years in prison.  
**Photos:** None

### 15. Destruction and desecration of the church in Jenin near Gorzów

**Date:** 25 December 2019  
**Description of the event:** Unknown perpetrators broke into the church in Jenin, destroyed three crosses, set fire to the pews and table with pamphlets and damaged the front door.  
**Perpetrator:** Unidentified
Attacks on Religious Images/Symbols

1. Profanation of Kalwaria of Panewniki in the parish of St. Ludwik and of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Katowice-Panewnik

Date: 22/23 February 2019

Description of the event: In the parish of St. Ludwik and of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Katowice-Panewnik there was an act of vandalism and desecration of four rosary chapels at Kalwaria of Panewnik. The figures of Christ, other sculptures and doors were painted with black paint, with among others “Ave Satan” inscriptions, pentagrams and paintings in the shape of male genitals.

Perpetrator: Two men and one woman, 16.

Source: https://www.tvp.info/41466912/ave-satan-pentagramy-i-genitalia-profanacja-kalwarii-w-katowicach (access date: 25.02.2019)
https://www.radioem.pl/gal/pokaz/5360210.Profanacja-kalwarii-w-katowickich-Panewnikach1#gt (access date: 25.02.2019)
https://katowice.gosc.pl/doc/5377326.Sprawcy-profanacji-kalwarii-w-Panewnikachzatrzymani (access date: 06.03.2019)

Status of the case: Teenagers have been questioned and will be accountable to a juvenile court.
2. Profanation of the cross in the parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Katowice

Date: 16/17 March 2019

Description of the event: Profanation took place in the parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus located in one of the Katowice districts – Koszutka. Unknown perpetrators most likely threw stones at the cross with the figure of the Lord Jesus, causing serious damage. The figure’s hand and both legs are broken.

Perpetrator: Man, 29 y.

Source: https://www.pch24.pl/profanacja-w-katowicach--nieznani-sprawcy-zdewastowali-krzyz,67005,i.html (access date: 21.03.2019)
https://dziennikzachodni.pl/katowice-zlapano-mezczyzne-ktory-zdewastowal-krzyz-i-figure-jezusa-przed-kosciolem-w-koszutce/ar/13983617 (access date: 22.03.2019)

Status of the case: The perpetrator was arrested by the police and pleaded guilty.

### 3. Kicking the cross in front of the church of St. Jude Thaddaeus and St. Anthony of Padua in Oborniki Śląskie

**Date:** 22/23 April 2019  
**Description of the event:** The perpetrator kicked several times the cross in front of the church of St. Jude Thaddaeus and St. Anthony of Padua in Oborniki Śląskie  
**Perpetrator:** Unidentified man  
**Status of the case:** No information  
**Photos:** None

### 4. Profanation of the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa in the parish of St. Maximilian Kolbe in Płock

**Date:** 26/27 April 2019  
**Description of the event:** The incident occurred in the parish of St. Maximilian Kolbe in Płock. On Saturday morning, parishioners informed local priest about posters with a profaned image of Our Lady of Częstochowa on bins and portable toilets. The poster presented the Virgin and Child with a rainbow halo.  
**Perpetrator:** Woman  
**Status of the case:** The perpetrator detained by the police on charges of offending religious feelings.
5. Profanation in the cathedral in Kwidzyn

Date: 3 May 2019

Description of the event: In the church of St. John the Evangelist in Kwidzyn, the perpetrator trampled and broke the cross, and poured alcohol into the stoup.

Perpetrator: Man

Source:
- https://www.tvp.info/42501507/profanacja-krzyza-w-katedrze-w-kwidzynie (access date: 06.05.2019)
- https://www.tvp.info/42501507/profanacja-krzyza-w-katedrze-w-kwidzynie (access date: 12.11.2019)

Status of the case: In the indictment, the prosecutor accused the man of “insulting religious feelings, directing criminal threats to his parents and violating his father’s physical integrity, as well as driving a vehicle in a state of intoxication.” The court acquitted the accused of offending religious feelings, while convicted him for the remaining charges. The District Prosecutor’s Office announced an appeal.

Photos: None

6. Profanation of the roadside figure of the Mother of God from Lourdes in Jasło

Date: 22/23 June 2019

Description of the event: The perpetrator removed the figure of the Mother of God from Lourdes from the chapel, then knocked it down and left in a roadside ditch. The figure of the Mother of God was covered with paint.

Perpetrator: Unidentified

Source:

Status of the case: The police are investigating the case.
7. Profanation of the figure of the Mother of God at the municipal festival in Warsaw

Date: 18 July 2019

Description of the event: During the Warsaw festival „Open Ząbkowska” a statue of the Mother of God painted black was displayed, surrounded with artificial hallucinogenic mushrooms. The whole thing was enclosed in a lantern, which was placed at the bench.

Perpetrator: Woman


Status of the case: No information

Photos:

8. Profanation of the monument to John Paul II in Świebodzice

Date: 15 August 2019

Description of the event: At night, the perpetrator hung a placard on the monument of John Paul II, (painted with a marker on a piece of cardboard, attached to the monument with a string, saying) “I was covering for pedophiles. I don’t pay VAT, PIT, ZUS’. And you?”.

Perpetrator: Unidentified

Source: https://wroclaw.wyborcza.pl/wroclaw/7,35771,25089425,napis-wypominajacy-krycie-pedofilow-na-pomniku-jana-pawla.html (access date: 15.08.2019)

Status of the case: The police could not locate the perpetrator

Photos: Source: https://wroclaw.wyborcza.pl/wroclaw/7,35771,25089425,napis-wypominajacy-krycie-pedofilow-na-pomniku-jana-pawla.html (access date: 15.08.2019)

9. Scribbled inscriptions over the cross on Giewont

Date: 23 August 2019

Description of the event: Two men scribbled inscriptions on the cross on Giewont, and published the pictures on Instagram.

Perpetrator: Two men

Source: https://tatromaniak.pl/aktualnosci/weszli-na-giewont-w-nocy-po-tragedii-i-pomazali-krzyz/ (access date: 23.08.2019)

Status of the case: No information


[*] Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych – Social Insurance Institution.
[**] „Kryłem pedofilów. Nie płacę VAT-u, PIT-u, ZUS. A Ty?”
[***] „Sylwek 23.08.2019 r., „Arkadiusz 23.08.2019 r.”, smiley face emoji. Sylwek (Sylwester) and Arkadiusz are Polish male names.
10. Destruction of the chapel of the Mother of God in Zamość

Date: 24 August 2019

Description of the event: In Zamość in Majdan St. the chapel of the Mother of God was damaged. The column on which the statue was placed has been smashed and the pots/vases with flowers have been broken.

Perpetrator: Man, 22

Source: https://www.se.pl/lublin/przeszkadzala-mu-matka-boska-zniszczyl-przydrozna-kapliczke-aa-M1Jo-zVCh-G2yr.html (access date: 24.08.2019)

Status of the case: The perpetrator appealed to the institution of voluntary submission to penalty. He wants to make amends for his act and cover the costs of repairing the chapel

Photos: [Image]

Source: https://www.se.pl/lublin/przeszkadzala-mu-matka-boska-zniszczyl-przydrozna-kapliczke-aa-M1Jo-zVCh-G2yr.html (access date: 24.08.2019)

11. Destruction of the chapels of the Mother of God in Włocławek

Date: 25/26 August 2019

Description of the event: Vandals destroyed several statues of the Mother of God and Jesus arranged in small chapels in the district Południe in Włocławek.

Perpetrator: Unidentified


Status of the case: The police are conducting proceedings

Photos: [Image]

12. Profanation of the host during the mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Trust in Tarnowiec
Date: 24 August 2019
Description of the event: The woman, after receiving Holy Communion, spat out the host and put it in her purse.
Perpetrator: Unidentified woman
Status of the case: In accordance with the Code of Canon Law, an expiatory service was celebrated in the shrine in Tarnowiec.
Photos: None

13. Defilement of the image of the Mother of God
Date: 25 September 2019
Description of the event: Vocalist Adam D. posted on social media a photo in which he tramples the image of the Virgin Mary.
Perpetrator: Man
Status of the case: The case was handled by the prosecutor’s office
14. Destruction of the statue of the Mother of God in Otwock
Date: 5 September 2019
Description of the event: The masked hooligan destroyed the figure of the Immaculate Virgin, striking it with a stick and smashing it.
Perpetrator: Unidentified man
Source:
Status of the case: An investigation into property damage was initiated. Steps are being taken to identify the perpetrator of the devastation. The proceedings are supervised by the prosecutor.
Photos:

15. Attempt to desecrate the host during the Holy Mass in the Church of Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of the Church in Bełchatów
Date: 31 October 2019
Description of the event: In the Church of Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of the Church in Bełchatów priests noticed during Holy Mass that the 13-year-old spat the host and put it in his pocket. Due to the threat of profanation of the host, the priests decided to call the police. The 13-year-old tried to run three times, struggled and provided false personal data. Profanation eventually did not happen, because he finally swallowed the host.
Perpetrator: teeneger, 13 .
Source:
Status of the case: A police patrol was called in to perform official duties.
Photos: None

16. Profanation of the cross in Orzech
Date: 2 November 2019
Description of the event: The cross from 1877 was stained, probably with a red paint.
Perpetrator: Teenage girl, 12 .
Source:
16. Destruction of the figurine of the Mother of God, Warsaw

Date: 3/4 December 2019

Description of the event: At night, unknown perpetrators destroyed the figurine of the Mother of God at the intersection of Bor Komorowskiego and Fieldorf streets in Warsaw.

Perpetrator: Unidentified


Status of the case: No information

Photos:

Source: https://www.facebook.com/147025375437819/photos/a.997771153696566/1574775519329457/?type=3&theater (access date: 06.12.2019)
Attacks on Clergy and Laity

1. Murder in the presbytery of the Church of St. Augustine, Warsaw
   Date: 11 April 2019
   Description of the event: The assailant attacked the priest and his father in the presbytery. The victim died as a result of the attack.
   Perpetrator: Man
   Status of the case: The suspect heard the charges of murder and injury to one of the priests.
   Photos: None

2. Attempted murder of a priest in Wrocław
   Date: 10 June 2019
   Description of the event: On Monday before 7 a.m. the priest was stabbed by a man. The incident occurred in Ostrów Tumski in the center of Wrocław.
   Perpetrator: Man
   Source: https://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/wydarzenia/artykuly/599876,atak-nozownik-ksiadz-wroclaw.html (access date: 10.06.2019)
   Status of the case: The perpetrator was detained by the police shortly after the incident. The man will appear in court charged with attempted murder.
   Photos: None

3. Attack on the priest in the parish office in Turek
   Date: 26 July 2019
   Description of the event: In the morning in the parish office of the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Turek an attack took place on the vicar on duty. The vicar was attacked by a man who grabbed the cross from the bookcase with one hand and threw the priest from the armchair on the floor with the other. Three women who accompanied the aggressor verbally attacked the priest. All the attackers shouted obscenities and insulted not only the priest, but also the church.
   Perpetrator: Three women, one man
   Source: https://diecezja.wloclawek.pl/pl,news2,turek:_atak_na_ksiedza_w_kancelarii_parafialnej910.html#tresc_strony (access date: 30.07.2019)
             https://www.fakt.pl/wydarzenia/polska/poznan/atak-na-ksiedza-w-kancelarii-parafialnej-w-turku/ck5s12s (access date: 30.07.2019)
   Status of the case: The victim did not want to make a notification regarding this matter. No proceedings are pending in this case.
   Photos: None

4. A priest was beaten and called names in Częstochowa
   Date: 6 September 2019
   Description of the event: The man attacked a priest on his way to the sick with the Blessed Sacrament, first verbally and then twice hit the priest in the face.
   Perpetrator: Man
5. Attack on priest in Mosina

Date: 3 November 2019

Description of the event: On Sunday after the evening mass at about 9.40 p.m. one of the priests of the parish in Mosina near Poznań found a group of three people in the church porch who were supposedly drinking alcohol, and one of them urinated in the porch. The priest was hit in the face.

Perpetrator: three men, 14

Source: https://wpolityce.pl/kryminal/471379-atak-na-ksiedza-w-mosinie-pod-poznaniem (access date: 04.11.2019)

Status of the case: The perpetrators were detained. The case will go to a family court.

Photos: None

Hate Speech Targeted at Christians and Christian Values (Derision, Parody, Profanation etc.)

1. The creation of the board game “Kleropol”

Date: On April 15, 2019, information on the finished product was sent to the media (Agora Publishing House, Gazeta Wyborcza).

Description of the event: Using the rules of the game „Monopoly”, the game „Kleropol” mocks and ridicules the institutions of the Church. A game was created by San Eskobar sp. z o.o.[7]

Perpetrator: Not applicable

Source: https://natemat.pl/273635,gra-jak-monopoly-o-kosciele-kleropol-planszowka-o-cow-niej-chodzi (access date: 23.05.2019)

Status of the case: None

2. Insults of Catholics during the speech at the University of Warsaw

Date: 3 May 2019

Description of the event: The editor Leszek J., during a speech at the University of Warsaw, insulted Catholics by comparing them to pigs.

Perpetrator: Man

Source: https://telewizjarepublika.pl/haniebny-atak-na-kosciol-jezyk-znany-z-propagandy-niemieckiej-ii-wojny-swiatowej,79614.html (access date: 06.05.2019)

Status of the case: The case was submitted to the prosecutor's office

Photos: None

3. Mocking the Catholic Church during the Juwenalia® of the State Higher Vocational School of Podhale in Nowy Targ

Date: 17 May 2019

Description of the event: During Juwenalia of the State Higher Vocational School of Podhale in Nowy Targ, during the procession four women were dressed in nun costumes. One of them had a rosary hung around her neck. Next to them there was a boy dressed in a white-and-red outfit with a miter on his head. He was moving in a cardboard box that looked like a car. The cardboard had the inscription 'Papa mobile'. Students carried a cross made of cardboard rolls.

Perpetrator: Four women and one man


Status of the case: The university authorities have taken disciplinary action against students based on the study regulations and statute of the SHVS.

[8] Card 1: "You can't serve both God and Mammon! Kleropol. A game that has never been seen before". Card 2: "Warsaw – a set of high-rise buildings 'Vatican Towers': Rent/ Rent when full/ Rent with 1 house/ Rent with 2 houses/ Rent with 3 houses/ Rent with a hotel/ Cost of the house/ Cost of the hotel". Card 3: "Miracles?". Card 4: "One of your subordinates is accused of harassing the organist's wife with whom he had an affair before. You are transferring him to another parish, but you must hire a lawyer. You pay 500 złoty. Ineffable are paths of God's love! Sources for the card in the brochure – No. 53".

4. A parody of Corpus Christi during the Pride Parade in Gdansk

Date: 25 May 2019

Description of the event: In the Pride Parade organized in Gdansk a person dressed up as a priest was carrying a pole with a drawing of a vagina in a place where the Blessed Sacrament is traditionally located during the Corpus Christi procession. Around the person dressed as a priest there were (parodying the ceremonies associated with the Corpus Christi procession) women with rainbow halos.

Perpetrator: Unidentified


Status of the case: The prosecutor’s office initiates proceedings regarding the possibility of committing a crime of offending religious feelings.

Photos: "Miłość może tylko łączyć". Marsz równości w Gdańsku bit.ly/2K8IZCF #TOKFM

5. Parody of the Holy Mass during the Pride Parade in Warsaw

Date: 8 June 2019

Description of the event: During Pride Parade in Warsaw, three perpetrators dressed as clergy (in rainbow colors) parodied the celebration of Holy Mass. „For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit” – says one of them.

Perpetrator: Three men

Source: https://telewizjarepublika.pl/obrzydliwa-prowokacja-na-paradzie-rownowsci-zwolennicy-lgbt-sprofanowali-msze-sw,81017.html (access date: 08.06.2019)

Status of the case: No information


6. The image of the Mother of God and baby Jesus with rainbow halos present during the 2nd Pride Parade in Częstochowa

Date: 16 June 2019

Description of the event: During the 2nd Pride Parade in Częstochowa, the participants carried, among others pictures, the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa with a rainbow halo.

Perpetrator: Unidentified


Status of the case: The case is handled by the Prosecutor’s Office

7. Lesbian photo session in the Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Mary Magdalene and St. Stanislaw the Bishop in Poznań

Date: 19 June 2019
Description of the event: Women kiss in front of one of the altars in the Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Mary Magdalene and St. Stanislaw the Bishop in Poznań, which is one of the most magnificent Baroque sacred buildings. Pictures were taken a few years ago, but only now they are massively shared on the Internet (shared on Tweet).  
Perpetrator: Two women
Source: https://wpolityce.pl/spoleczenstwo/451773-prowokacja-w-poznanskiej-farze-sesja-zdjeciowa-lesbijek (access date: 21.06.2019)  
Photos: Source: https://twitter.com/Piotr62726644/status/114140365861945856/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwpolityce.pl%2Fspoleczenstwo%2F451773-prowokacja-w-poznanskiej-farze-sesja-zdjeciowa-lesbijek (access date: 19.06.2020)

8. A SLD spokesman compared the Corpus Christi procession to the Pride Parade

Date: 20 June 2019
Description of the event: The left-wing activist in her Twitter account referred to the tradition of annual religious processions organized on the occasion of Corpus Christi, comparing them to the Pride Parade.  
Perpetrator: Woman

9. A verbal attack on the Church in Poland

Date: 26 June 2019
Description of the event: Hate speech presented on the Internet profile. In the presented entry, the author alleges, among others, that “religion has become a hostage of the mafia’s authority building hatred or even fascism.”  
Perpetrator: Man

10. An employee of the Ikea network dismissed for quoting the Bible

**Date:** 27 June 2019

**Description of the event:** An employee of the Ikea network dismissed because he expressed his opinion inspired by fragments of the Holy Bible on the company’s internet forum, in response to the ideological agitation of the employer.

**Perpetrator:** Not applicable

**Source:**
- https://www.m.pch24.pl/cytowal-pismo-swiete--stracil-prace--znana-siec-handlowa-na-strazy-ideologii-gender,69180,i.html?bidc=IwAARojNGtGmnni1XZCXkULgqh9f97q9yv5gA9zU0aAQs7l-hMHcKsUGT0 (access date: 27.06.2019)

**Status of the case:** The case was forwarded to the Prosecutor’s Office

**Photos:** None

11. March against Pope John Paul II in Cracow

**Date:** 29 June 2019

**Description of the event:** The march started from Matejko Sq. in Cracow, near the church of St. Florian, where Fr. Karol Wojtyła worked as a vicar. About 30 demonstrators had banners with: “JPII – GUILTY, NOT SAINT,” “THE CHURCH COVERS FOR PEDOPHILES” and “TIME FOR LAST JUDGMENT”. They marched to the beat of Maria Peszek’s song “The Lord is not my Shepherd”. You could also hear baby crying recordings and the “out of tune” melody of the song “The barge”.

**Perpetrator:** Unidentified

**Source:** https://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/7,44425,24947915,marsz-przeciw-panowi-pawlowi-ii-w-krakowie-wojtyla-byl-zlym.html (access date: 29.06.2019)

**Status of the case:** No information

**Photos:**
- Source: https://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/7,44425,24947915,marsz-przeciw-panowi-pawlowi-ii-w-krakowie-wojtyla-byl-zlym.html (access date: 29.06.2019)

[12] “Barka”, favorite religious song of John Paul II.

[13] JPII – GUILTY, NOT SAINT. In Polish “święty” means both “saint” and “holy”, so this sentence equivalent is grammatically correct.
12. Attack on the Catholic Church and acceptance by the Deputy Mayor of Warsaw

Date: 22 July 2019

Description of the event: On the graphics posted on Twitter by an anonymous user who goes by a nickname Viki a figure of a Catholic priest (indicated by the outfit) is presented depicting a sexual activity with the child and showing the direction for armed persons, who “hunt” for homosexuals standing under the rainbow. The Deputy Mayor of Warsaw “liked”/approved of this Twitter graphics that attack the Catholic Church.

Perpetrator: Unidentified


Status of the case: No information


13. Publication of the graphics combining the cross with the swastika

Date: 22 July 2019

Description of the event: A member of the Green Party[^1] posted graphics on Facebook, which present a black cross with a background shadow in the form of a swastika. Under the graphics there is a caption “we must be careful”.

Perpetrator: The graphics were published by Marcin K. from the Green Party. Its author was Klaudia Z.

Source: https://www.tvp.info/43636021/dzialacz-zielonych-chwali-grafike-z-krzyzem-jako-swastyka (access date: 24.07.2019)

Status of the case: No information

Photos: ![Image](https://www.tvp.info/43636021/dzialacz-zielonych-chwali-grafike-z-krzyzem-jako-swastyka)

[^1]: Polish: Partia „Zielonych”.
14. Church burdened with responsibility for growing hate towards LGBT communities

Date: 26 July 2019

Description of the event: During the interview in TOK FM\textsuperscript{15}, the Ombudsman attacked the Church for “an ambiguous approach to respect for LGBT rights.” In his opinion: “in Poland a wave of hatred is growing, which is manifested, among others, by the Catholic Church’s approach to the LGBT theme.”

Perpetrator: man


Status of the case: No information

Photos: None

15. Profanation of the Mother of God on the Internet through the figurine “Pussy-Mary\textsuperscript{16}”

Date: 26 July 2019

Description of the event: A video was published on the YouTube platform promoting figurines of “Pussy-Marys”, resembling the figurines of the Mother of God.

Perpetrator: Woman (Dominika K.)

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qpaepq_-_240 (access date: 26.07.2019)

Status of the case: The prosecutor’s Office sent an indictment to the court for insulting religious feelings


16. A school performance parodying the image of God and Religious Education teacher at the Primary School in Beldów

Date: 29 July 2019

Description of the event: In the primary school in Beldów, eighth graders organized a farewell stand-up comedy performance for teachers, during which some boys were dressed up as female teachers. In the sketch a Religious Education teacher also appeared, who – like in the Neo-Nówka\textsuperscript{17} stand-up comedians – “is famous because he likes nailing down students with nails”. To the remark that “there is no place for Prussian methods at school” – the teacher replies that “this is the reason why he uses Roman methods”. There was also a student in the group who was drawing God on a piece of paper. To the comment of a friend – dressed up as a teacher – that “nobody knows what God looks like” – she replied that “they would find out soon.”

\(\textsuperscript{15}\) Polish supra-regional news and journalistic radio station.

\(\textsuperscript{16}\) In Polish: “Cipko-Maryjka”, “Maryjka” is a Polish diminutive for “Maria” (Mary): “Maryja” (only used in reference to Holy Mary). The term “Maryjka” alone is often used dismissively.

\(\textsuperscript{17}\) Polish group of stand-up comedians dealing mainly with social and political topics.
Perpetrator: Students of the eighth grade of elementary school in Beldów
Status of the case: By decision of the Pedagogical Council, it was accepted that subsequent performances would be more supervised by teachers.

17. Profanation of the Holy Mass in the church St. Martin the Bishop in Szubin – bringing a dead dog to the church
Date: 31 July 2019
Description of the event: In the church of St. Martin the Bishop in Szubin, the Holy Mass was interrupted by a woman who brought a dead dog to the church. She began shouting profanitied, then left the animal in the porch and left.
Perpetrator: Woman, 62.
Source: https://nczas.com/2019/08/01/kobieta-przerwala-msze-swieta-przyniosla-do-kosciola-martwego-psz/ (access date: 01.08.2019)
Status of the case: The proceedings in the case are pending regarding interruption of a religious worship, as well as animal abuse.
Photos: None

18. A verbal attack on the institution of the Catholic Church
Date: 2 August 2019
Description of the event: The redactor Leszek J. on the OKO.press18 website argues that “The Catholic Church, which has been a paradise for pedophiles for decades, the only organization in the world that covers for rapists of minors, should ask the victims of sexual harassment on its knees for forgiveness, instead of instructing the parents who they should entrust with education of their children.”
And,
“The freedom of religious practices in Europe is in no danger. The reactionary rejection of modernity by Islamic or Catholic fundamentalism is not about defending faith. The right of people to decide about themselves, including their sexuality, does not limit those who want to be guided in any way by moral orders of this or other religion – only for political power.” Each day brings a sad confirmation of the thesis that the Catholic Church in Poland has lost the right to be the conscience of the nation.”
Perpetrator: Man
Source: https://telewizjarepublika.pl/kosciol-bedacy-rajem-dla-pedofilow-jazdzewski-w-haniebny-sposob-atakujes-kk,83277.html (access date: 02.08.2019)
Status of the case: No information
Photos: None

19. A profaned image of the Mother of God on the door of the PiS20 office
Date: 5 August 2019
Description of the event: On the door of the Warsaw office of the former Minister of the Environment prof. Jan Szyszko and prof. Jan Żaryn someone placed a profaned image of Our Lady of Częstochowa with a rainbow halo representing the colors of the LGBT+ movement.21
| Perpetrator: | Unidentified |
| Source: | [Link](https://www.m.pch24.pl/sprofanowany-wizerunek-matki-bozej-na-drzwiach-biura-pis--aktywisci-lgbt--znow-prowokuja--pch,70031,i.html?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=post&utm_term=pch) (access date: 08.08.2019) |
| Status of the case: | A police station in Warsaw was informed about the case. After the notification, a local visit was carried out, and on Wednesday (07.08.) an official notification was made to the police station. |
| Photos: | None |

### 20. Profanation of the icon of the Our Lady of Guadalupe

**Date:** 15 August 2019  
**Description of the event:** On Twitter profile of the Cracow branch of the Together party appeared a profaned Icon of the Our Lady of Guadalupe which was surrounded by marijuana leaves.  
**Perpetrator:** Not applicable albo n/a  
**Source:** [Link](https://dorzeczy.pl/kraj/111170/Razem-zamieszcza-sprofanowana-ikone-Matki-Boskiej-z-Guadalupe-Semka-Glupie-i-wulgarne.html) (access date: 16.08.2019)  
**Status of the case:** No information  
**Photos:** ![Image](https://dorzeczy.pl/kraj/111170/Razem-zamieszcza-sprofanowana-ikone-Matki-Boskiej-z-Guadalupe-Semka-Glupie-i-wulgarne.html) (access date: 16.08.2019)

### 21. The Mayor of Bydgoszcz blocked access to the Cathedral of Bydgoszcz

**Date:** 4 September 2019  
**Description of the event:** The Mayor of Bydgoszcz blocked access to the Cathedral of Bydgoszcz. Car traffic is to be closed there from 8 September. Bishop of Bydgoszcz, Jan Tyrawa wrote a letter to the Mayor regarding this decision, in which he says that the regulation violates the freedom of the Church.  
**Perpetrator:** Man  
**Source:** [Link](https://www.radiomaryja.pl/informacje/prezydent-bydgoszczy-zablokowal-dojazd-do-katedry-bydgoskiej/) (access date: 04.09.2019)  
**Status of the case:** No information  
**Photos:** None

22. Interfering during the Holy Mass in the Cathedral of St. Stanislaw the Bishop and Martyr and St. Waclaw the Martyr in Świdnica

Date: 16 September 2019

Description of the event: During the Eucharist celebrated in the Cathedral of St. Stanislaw the Bishop and Martyr and St. Waclaw the Martyr in Świdnica, during the Sunday liturgy, perpetrators invaded the temple, and disrupted the liturgy shouting: „God, honor, fatherland” and waving a colorful flag.

Perpetrator: 3 women and 1 man

Source: 

Status of the case: Persons detained by the police for clarification.

Photos: None

23. The deputy editor-in-chief of NIE in Warsaw dressed up as a “pedophile priest”

Date: 18 October 2019

Description of the event: In front of the cathedral basilica of St. Michael Archangel and St. Florian the Martyr in Warsaw an outrageous happening took place. The starring role was played by the deputy editor-in-chief of a weekly „NIE” dressed up as a “pedophile priest”, who was chased by children holding sparklers.

Perpetrator: Man

Source: 

Status of the case: No information

Photos: 


24. The cross was removed from the Registry Office in Białołęka

Date: 19 October 2019

Description of the event: The cross was removed from the wall of the wedding hall of the Registry Office in Białołęka. This was demanded by a Warsaw council member who submitted an interpellation to the Mayor of Warsaw on this matter.

Perpetrator: Woman

Source: 

25. Councilors of the Civic Platform\(^{24}\) cancelled Christmas meeting with the traditional Christmas wafer sharing

Date: 1 December 2019

Description of the event: Warsaw councilors on behalf of the Civic Platform decided to cancel Christmas meeting with the traditional Christmas wafer sharing (opłatek)\(^{25}\) and not to invite clergymen to the meeting.

Perpetrator: Councilors of the capital city of Warsaw representing the Civic Platform


Status of the case: No information

26. Theft of money from church money boxes in the parish church of St. Wojciech and St. Stanislaw in Rzeszów

Date: 9 December 2019

Description of the event: In the parish church of St. Wojciech and St. Stanislaw in Rzeszów a man was trying to steal the money from church money boxes with a piece of wire. A woman who was in the church at the same time informed the municipal police about the strange behavior of the young man.

Perpetrator: Man


Status of the case: A thief handed over to the police.

27. Reserved (a clothing store chain) in Warsaw advertises itself with the slogan “silent night — party night”

Date: 20 December 2019

Description of the event: One of the shops belonging to a Polish clothing store chain Reserved located opposite the Palace of Culture in Warsaw used the advertising slogan “silent night – party night” in the shop window at Christmas time, mocking the carol “Silent Night”.

Perpetrator: Not applicable n/a


Status of the case: No information

\(^{24}\) Koalycja Obywatelska (political party).

\(^{25}\) Christmas wafer meeting.
Numerical Summary

In 2019 there were 64 recorded cases of religious freedom violation – including:

- Physical attacks on places of worship – 15
- Attacks on religious images/symbols – 17
- Attacks on clergy and laity – 5
- Hate speech targeted at Christians and Christian values (derision, parody, profanation etc.) – 27

Violation of religious freedom. Cases reported in 2019
Number of recorded cases in a given month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average: 5.3 cases per month.

Entities violating the right to religious freedom:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Unidentified</th>
<th>Other entities (e.g. a group of people, company, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of violations</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

84 entities in total.
Voivodeships in which violations of the right to religious freedom were recorded:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voivodeships</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Silesian</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuyavian-Pomeranian</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lublin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lubusz</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Łódź</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesser Poland</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masovian</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opole</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subcarpathian</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podlaskie</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomeranian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silesian</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Świętokrzyskie</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warmian-Masurian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Poland</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Pomeranian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 cases were not included due to the inability to assign a case to the voivodship, due to the occurrence of the act of violation – e.g. on the Internet.
Conclusions

1. This report documents 64 cases of broadly understood violations of the right to freedom of conscience and religion among Christians recorded in 2019, including 15 cases of physical attacks on places of worship, 17 attacks on images/religious symbols, 5 attacks on clergy and laity, 27 cases of derision, parody, profanation and other forms of persecution against Christians because of their religious affiliation.

2. Acts of hatred towards Christians give rise to social tensions, as well as increase the feeling of danger, fear, embarrassment, non-acceptance of believers because of their religious affiliation and because of the desire to manifest it. Some perpetrators have not been punished for their actions violating the religious freedom of citizens, which raises the question of the effectiveness of legal system in Poland.

3. Respect (and estimation) of the right to religious freedom benefits not only believers, but also favors society as a whole by promoting peaceful coexistence among citizens.

4. There is no proper preventive program aimed at hampering later acts of hate speech against Christians, and better protection of the right to religious freedom.

5. Some cases/examples of hate speech violating the right to religious freedom do not always fall into the category of acts prohibited by criminal law, but also combine other areas of law, such as labor law.