



MEĐURELIGIJSKO VIJEĆE U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI  
МЕЂУРЕЛИГИЈСКО ВИЈЕЋЕ У БОСНИ И ХЕРЦЕГОВИНИ  
*Interreligious Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina*

**MONITORING OF ATTACKS ON RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS AND OTHER SITES OF  
IMPORTANCE FOR CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN BOSNIA  
AND HERZEGOVINA – PROTECTION OF HOLY SITES**

**THE FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

“Monitoring of attacks on religious buildings and other sites of importance for churches and religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, or in short the “Protection of Holy Sites” Project, started on 1 November 2010 as a pilot project of the Interreligious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina (IRC BiH) which is implemented in cooperation with the Nansen Dialogue Centre and the Oslo Centre for Peace and Human Rights. This project was developed as part of a larger project “Universal Code on Holy Sites”, which aims to adopt a single document in the form of a declaration or a resolution of the United Nations (UN), which would provide protection of the holy sites of all religions across the globe. The main goal of the project “Protection of Holy Sites” is to improve the protection of religious buildings and other sites of importance for churches and religious communities (holy sites) of all confessions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The accompanying objectives of the project are to establish records of attacks on religious buildings, analysis of data collected in terms of: mode of attack, attack motives, identifying the perpetrators as well as the areas where they carry out attacks etc. After the analysis of the results of monitoring of attacks on religious buildings in each reporting period, the Inter-religious Council in BiH defines proposals to the competent authorities on how they can improve the protection of religious buildings in certain areas.

We use this opportunity to especially thank the Embassy of the United States which, through its grant, funded the project implementation in the last three reporting periods (1/11/2011 – 31/ 10/2014).

## 2. RESULTS

During the period of the project implementation (1/11/2013 – 31/10/2014), the office of the Secretariat of IRC BiH received 49 reports of attacks on religious buildings, religious ministers and believers who are directly related to religious buildings. This number of reported attacks probably does not represent the total number of attacks on religious buildings in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Information on attacks on religious objects was collected in the following ways:

- obtaining information from religious officials who reported attacks in their local community,
- obtaining information through various media about the attacks on religious buildings upon verification of these findings with local religious officials,
- obtaining information from the police authorities.

Using different methods of data collection, we tried to get the most complete picture of the total number of attacks on religious buildings. The fact is that none of the traditional churches and religious communities has been exempt from attacks on their property, and the places of attacks are distributed across the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Table 1: Cities/municipalities where religious buildings were attacked

S/N	City/Municipality	No.of attacks	S/N	City/Municipality	No.of attacks
1.	Banja Luka	7	13.	Prijedor	2
2.	Bijeljina	4	14.	Prnjavor	1
3.	Doboj	1	15.	Sanski Most	1
4.	Jablanica	1	16.	Sarajevo	5
5.	Kakanj	1	17.	Srebrenica	1
6.	Kiseljak	1	18.	Tesli	1
7.	Kozarska Dubica	1	19.	Trebinje	1
8.	Livno	1	20.	Tuzla	2
9.	Lopare	5	21.	Višegrad	1
10.	Mostar	1	22.	Zenica	1
11.	Mrkonji Grad	1	23.	Zvornik	8
12.	Novi Grad	1			



Figure 1: Map overview of the cities/municipalities where attacks happened

Of the total number of attacks, 21 attacks were on the buildings of the Islamic Community, 14 attacks on the buildings of Serbian Orthodox Church, 12 attacks on the buildings of Catholic Church, 1 attack on the building of Jewish community and 1 attack on the building of Advent Christian Church.

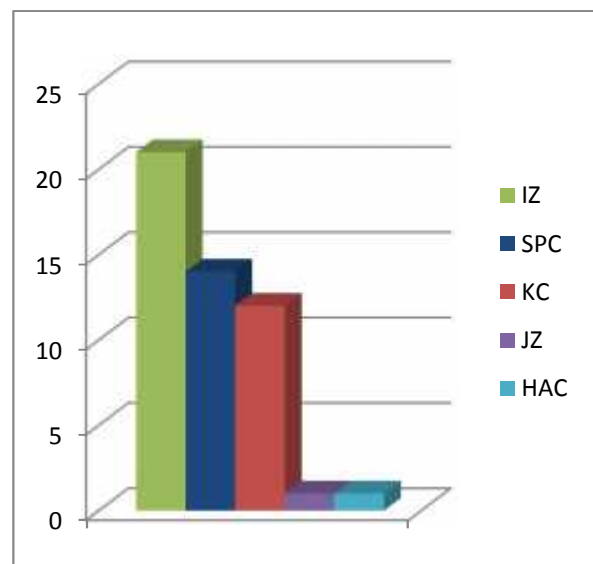
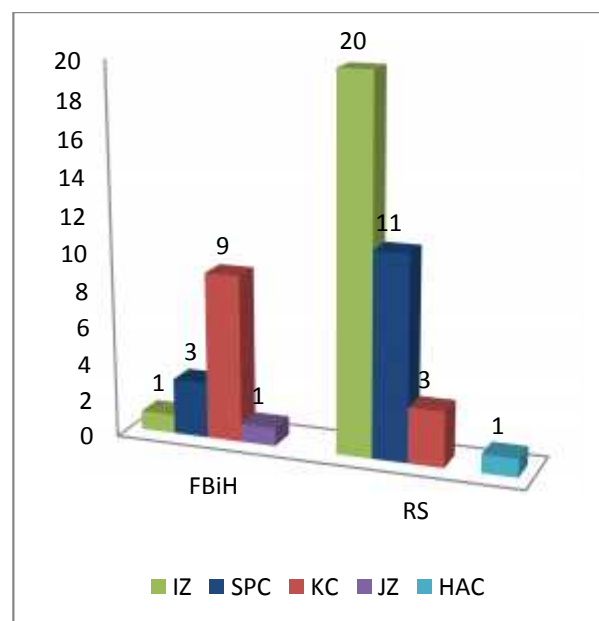


Figure 2: Number of attacks on churches and religious communities

In this reporting period, in most cases attacks were carried out on religious buildings of churches and religious communities which are, conditionally speaking, minority in terms of number of believers in the relevant area.



*Figure 3: Number of attacks on churches and religious communities in relation to the Entity where they are located*

IRC BiH has condemned each of the reported attacks and, if it was necessary, organized an on-site visit, visit to the attacked church and unified condemnation of the attack with representatives of other churches and religious communities as well as representatives of the local administration. We are particularly encouraged by the fact that there are cases when representatives of churches and religious communities in a particular local community, on their own initiative, organize unified condemnations of attacks on religious buildings.

Besides joint condemnation of the attacks, the Inter-Religious Council organized meetings with representatives of law enforcement agencies and prosecutors' offices throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, with an emphasis on the places of frequent attacks. At these meetings the results of monitoring of attacks on religious building in the last reporting period were presented and also the ways of improving the protection of religious buildings were discussed.

If we divide the attacks on religious buildings by the motives for the attack on the basis of our findings, we will see that 49% of attacks were carried out with the motive of desecration of religious buildings, then 47% of the attacks can be characterized by the motive of theft of property belonging to another, and only 4% of the total number of attacks is a combination of motives of theft and desecration of religious buildings.

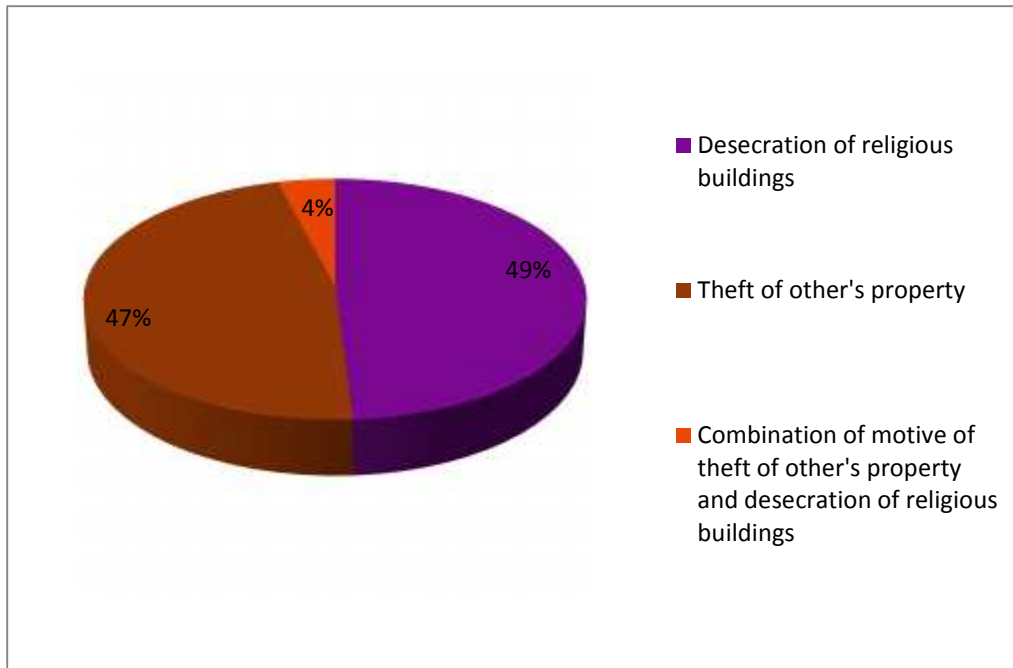


Figure 4: Distribution by the motive of attacks

When it comes to the rate of solved cases, or the number of identified perpetrators, we received information from the competent authorities of the Federation of BiH and the Republika Srpska that out of a total of 49 attacks in the reporting period the perpetrators were identified in only 15 cases, or a percentage of 31%.

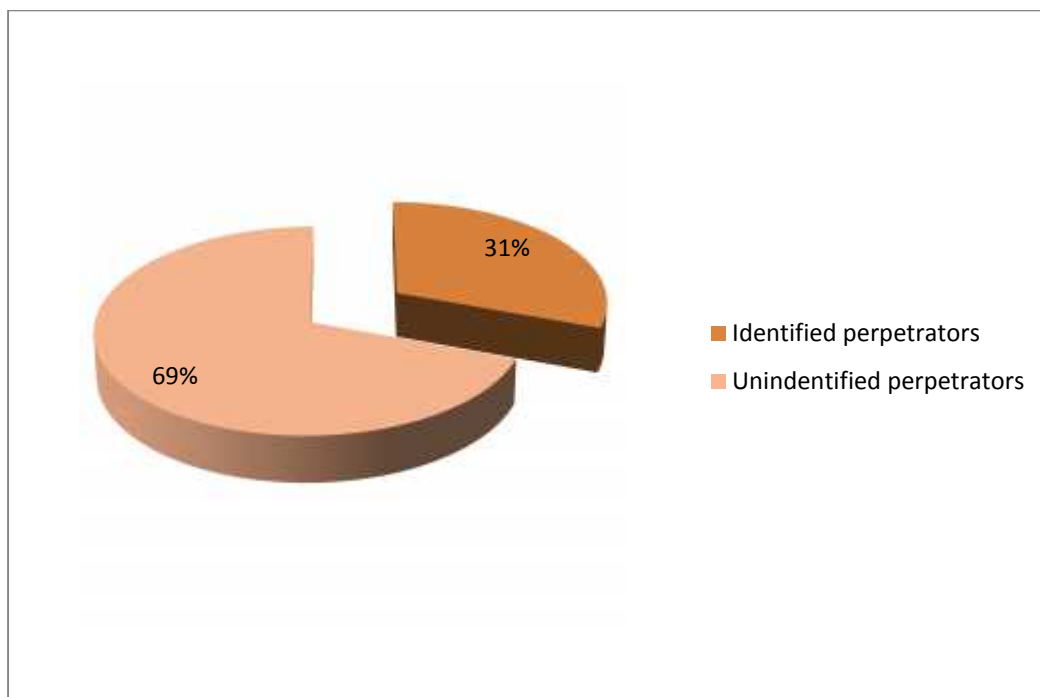


Figure 5: Percentage of identified perpetrators

### 3. LIST OF RECEIVED REPORTS

List of attacks on religious buildings, priests and believers who are directly related to religious buildings, for the reporting period from 1 November 2013 to 31 October 2014 has been arranged chronologically by date of report and reference number.

Table 2: List of registered attacks on churches and religious communities

Reference number	Name of religious building	Church or religious community	Location	Date
118-11/2013	Cathedral of the Nativity of Holy Mother of God	Serbian Orthodox Church	Sarajevo	23/11/2013
119-12/2013	Attack on the chief Muslim priest	Islamic Community	Novi Grad	16/12/2013
120-12/2013	Cathedral of the Nativity of Holy Mother of God	Serbian Orthodox Church	Sarajevo	13/12/2013
121-01/2014	Kizlar-aga's mosque	Islamic Community	Mrkonji Grad	06.01.2014.
122-01/2014	Two Catholic cemeteries: St. Joseph the Worker and St. Joseph the Fiancé	Catholic Church	Tuzla	13.01.2014.
123-01/2014	Parish house in Ljubija	Catholic Church	Prijedor	13.01.2014.
124-01/2014	Orthodox cemetery Dubnica	Serbian Orthodox Church	Banja Luka	14.01.2014.
125-02/2014	Sultan Suleiman Atik mosque	Islamic Community	Bijeljina	01.02.2014.
126-02/2014	Orthodox temple of St. Ognjen Marina the Holy Martyr	Serbian Orthodox Church	Tesli	04.02.2014.
127-02/2014	Advent Christian Church	Advent Christian Church	Banja Luka	06.02.2014.
128-02/2014	Orthodox Church in Oraovac	Serbian Orthodox Church	Zvornik	06.02.2014.
129-02/2014	Building of Church Municipality Lopare	Serbian Orthodox Church	Lopare	12/13.02.2014.
130-02/2014	Muslim cemetery in Pridjel	Islamic Community	Doboj	18.02.2014.
131-02/2014	Muslim cemetery of the Town mosque in elinac	Islamic Community	Banja Luka	24.02.2014.
132-03/2014	Majlis of IC Trebinje	Islamic Community	Trebinje	09.03.2014.
133-03/2014	Serbian Orthodox Church in Janja	Serbian Orthodox Church	Bijeljina	12.03.2014.
134-03/2014	Cemetery Palakuša	Islamic Community	Bijeljina	10/14.03.2014.
135-03/2014	Sefer Bey's Mosque	Islamic Community	Banja Luka	19.03.2014.-
136-03/2014	Majlis of IC Bosanska Dubica	Islamic Community	Kozarska Dubica	20.03.2014.
137-03/2014	Mausoleum in Divi	Islamic Community	Zvornik	28.03.2014.
138-04/2014	Parish Church Holy Name of Mary	Catholic Church	Kiseljak	06.04.2014.



Reference number	Name of religious building	Church or religious community	Location	Date
139-04/2014	Parish Church of the Visitation BDM	Catholic Church	Banja Luka	15.04.2014.
140-04/2014	Building of Church Municipality Lopare	Serbian Orthodox Church	Lopare	24.04.2014.
141-05/2014	Place to build the synagogue	Jewish Community	Mostar	05.05.2014.
142-05/2014	Mosque Rijeka	Islamic Community	Zvornik	08.05.2014.
143-05/2014	Church of St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Serbian Orthodox Church	Bijeljina	14/15.05.2014.
144-05/2014	Emperor's Mosque in Dobrun	Islamic Community	Višegrad	23.05.2014.
145-05/2014	Mosque Begsuja	Islamic Community	Zvornik	23.05.2014.
146-05/2014	Mosque Rijeka	Islamic Community	Zvornik	31.05.2014.
147-06/2014	Chapel in Gradiš e	Catholic Church	Zenica	12.06.2014.
148-06/2014	Mosque of Hajji Ahmed Dukatar in Topovi	Islamic Community	Livno	17.06.2014.
149-06/2014	Parish Church of St. Anthony of Padua	Catholic Church	Prnjavor	19.06.2014.
150-06/2014	Sefer Bey's Mosque	Islamic Community	Banja Luka	22.06.2014.
151-06/2014	Mausoleum in Divi	Islamic Community	Zvornik	24.06.2014.
152-07/2014	Filial chapel of St. Leopold Mandi in Dobrinja	Catholic Church	Kakanj	14.07.2014.
153-07/2014	Catholic cemetery in Grabovica	Catholic Church	Jablanica	20.07.2014.
154-07/2014	Parish house in Sanski Most	Catholic Church	Sanski Most	31. 07. 2014.
155-07/2014	Insulting of a priest	Serbian Orthodox Church	Srebrenica	jul.2014.
156-08/2014	Caritas Student Home King Tomislav	Catholic Church	Sarajevo	21. 08. 2014.
157-08/2014	Church of Inception of St. John the Baptist	Serbian Orthodox Church	Lopare	23.08.2014.
158-08/2014	Church of the Nativity of Holy Mother of God	Serbian Orthodox Church	Lopare	24/25.08.2014.
159-08/2014	Church of Inception of St. John the Baptist	Serbian Orthodox Church	Lopare	26.08.2014.
160-09/2014	Mausoleum in Divi	Islamic Community	Zvornik	01.09.2014.
161-09/2014	Catholic Cemetery Podlugovi	Catholic Church	Sarajevo	03.09.2014.
162-09/2014	Temple of St. George the Great Martyr	Serbian Orthodox Church	Tuzla	05.09.2014.
163-09/2014	Town mosque in Prijedor	Islamic Community	Prijedor	15.09.2014.
164-09/2014	Church and parish house in Dobrinja	Catholic Church	Sarajevo	23.09.2014.
165-10/2014	Mausoleum in Divi	Islamic Community	Zvornik	25/26.10.2014.
166-10/2014	Mosque Gazanferija	Islamic Community	Banja Luka	28.10.2014.

#### **4. UNIFIED CONDEMNATION OF ATTACKS ON RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS**

All unified condemnations of attacks on religious buildings, organized by the Secretariat of IRC BiH, were organized following the regular hierarchy of churches and religious communities. From the beginning, the project has the support of religious leaders of the four traditional churches and religious communities in IRC in BiH. In most cases, religious leaders have an understanding of the problems of minority communities, because each of the churches and religious communities in BiH is minority in some parts of the country and they are all familiar with similar problems. This is one of the main reasons why many religious officials are usually very interested in participating in these events and showing solidarity with their colleagues from different churches and religious communities when it comes to attacks on religious buildings.

#### **5. REPORTING FOR THE MEDIA ABOUT THE PROJECT**

This project has been well received in the media from the very beginning. Media representatives have recognized the importance of this project and made a huge contribution in informing the public about the project and thereby contributed to the affirmation of an atmosphere of tolerance and peaceful coexistence in BiH society. Many media cover the project and regularly report on our condemnations of attacks on religious buildings. Reporting has been mostly fair and balanced.

## 6. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

From the beginning of the project (1/11/2010) to the end of the reporting period (31/10/2014) there were 166 attacks on religious buildings, religious officials and believers who are directly related to religious buildings, of which 77 were attacks on the Islamic Community buildings, 52 attacks on the Serbian Orthodox Church buildings, 32 on the Catholic Church buildings, 4 on the Jewish community buildings, and 1 attack on the Advent Christian Church building.

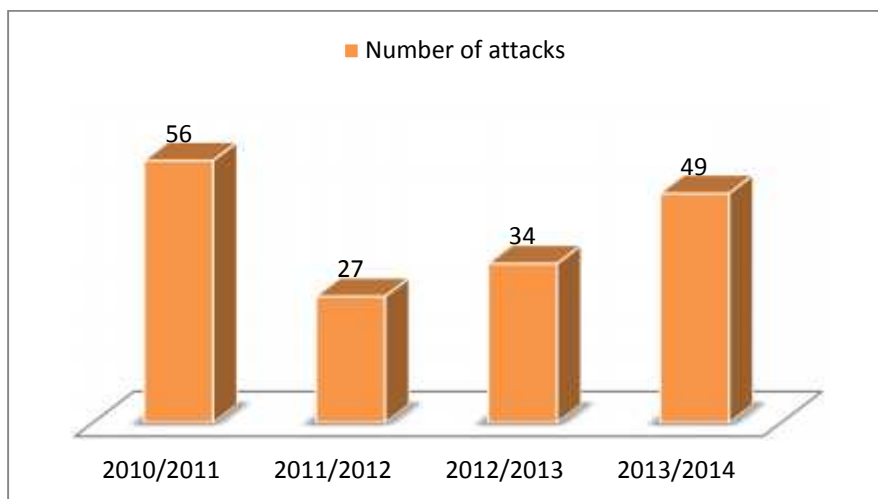


Figure 6: Total number of attacks in the period 2010 -2014

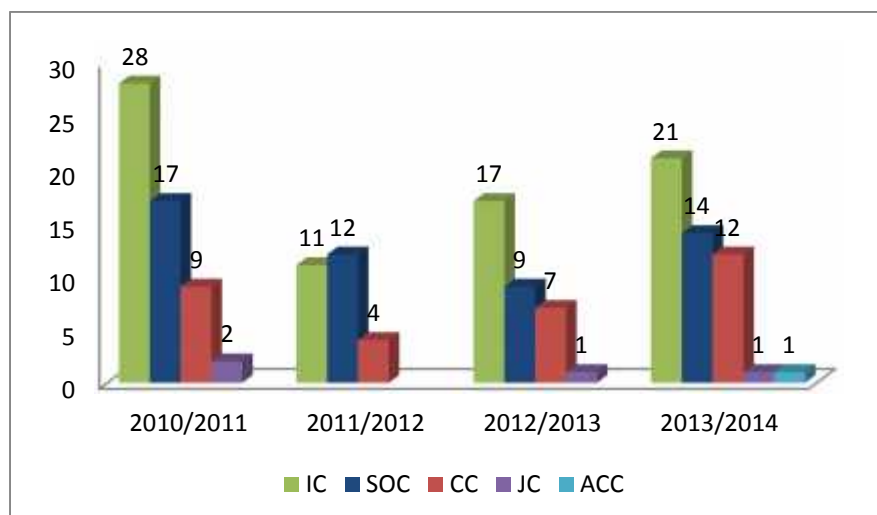


Figure 7: Number of attacks on churches and religious communities in the period 2010-2014

From a total of 166 attacks on religious buildings from the beginning of the project implementation until the end of the reporting period, according to our findings, 59% of the attacks was made with the motive of desecration of a religious building, 31% with the motive of theft of the other’s property of and 10% of total attacks is a combination of motives of theft of the other’s property and desecration of a religious building.

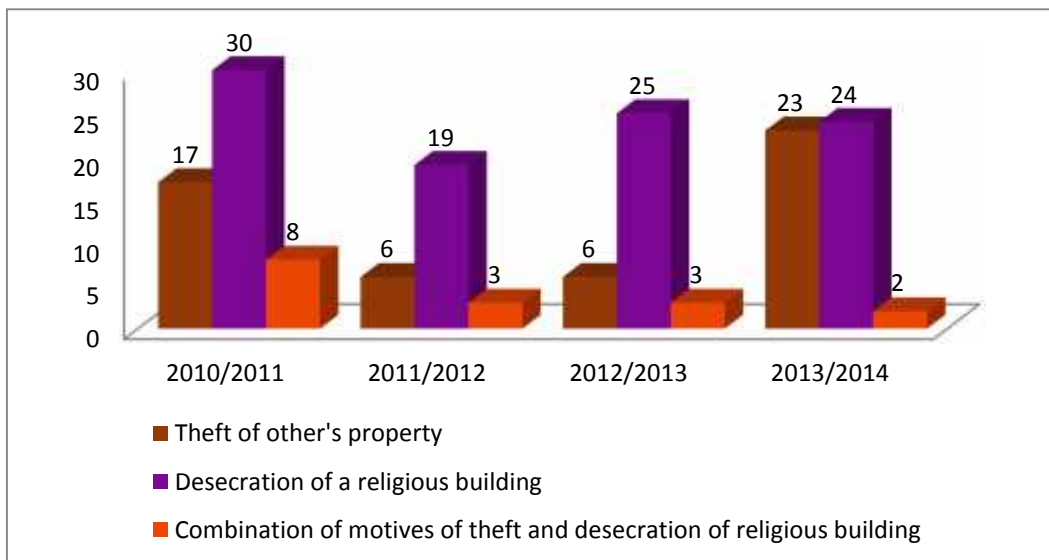


Figure 8: Distribution by the motives of attacks for each reporting period

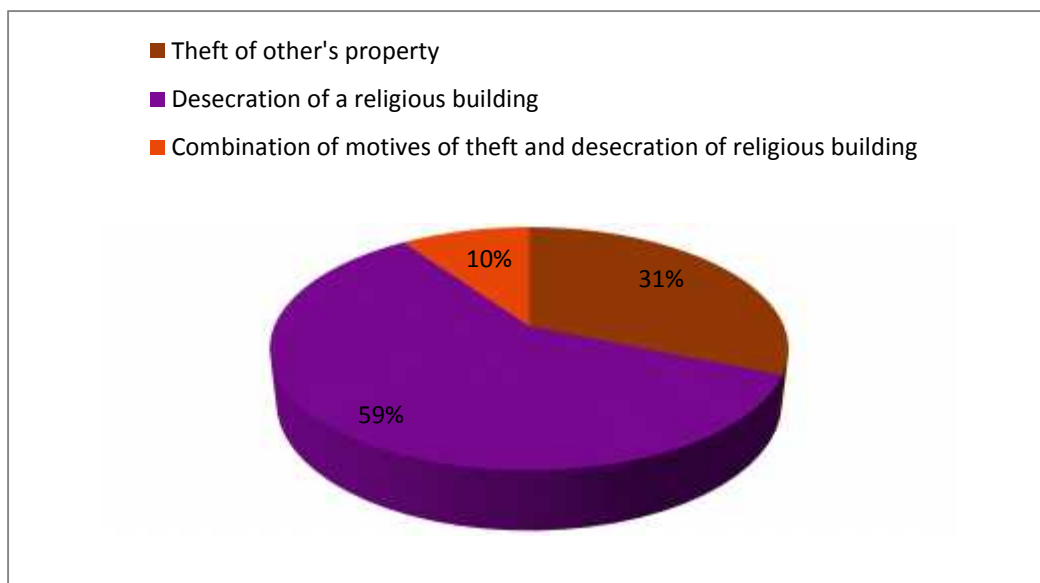


Figure 9: Distribution by the motive of attacks for the period 2010-2014

Since the beginning of the project implementation (1/11/2010) until the end of the reporting period (31/10/2014) from a total of 166 reported attacks, the competent authorities in BiH were able to identify the perpetrators of 55 reported attacks, as a percentage of 33% of the total number of attacks. Of these, up to date, for 23 the judgments were brought adopted.

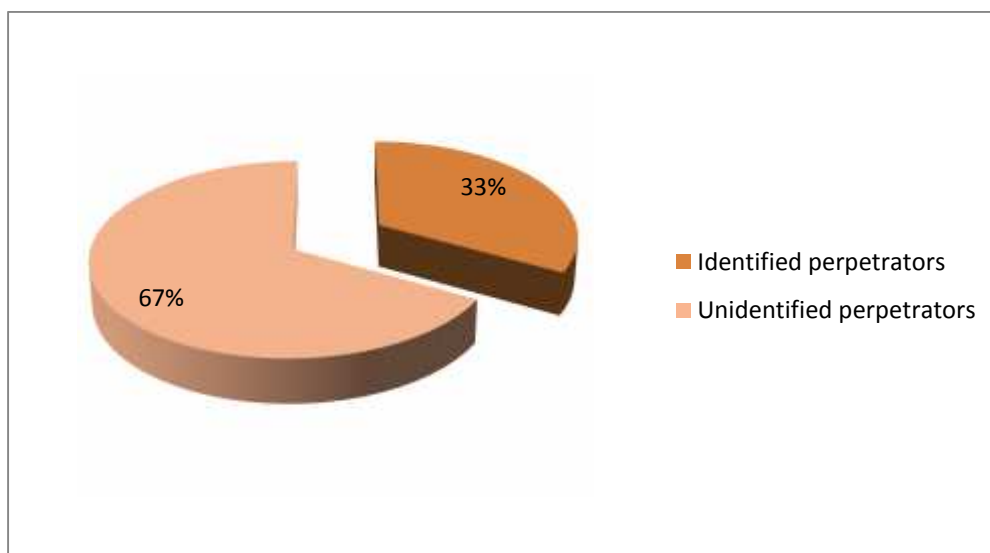


Figure 10: Percentage of identified perpetrators for the period 2010-2014

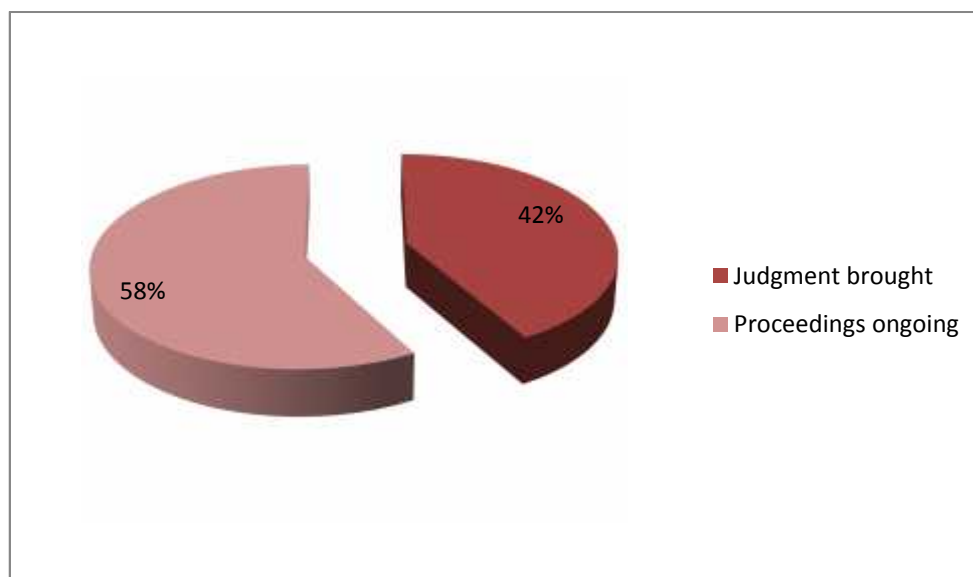


Figure 11: Percentage of adopted judgments

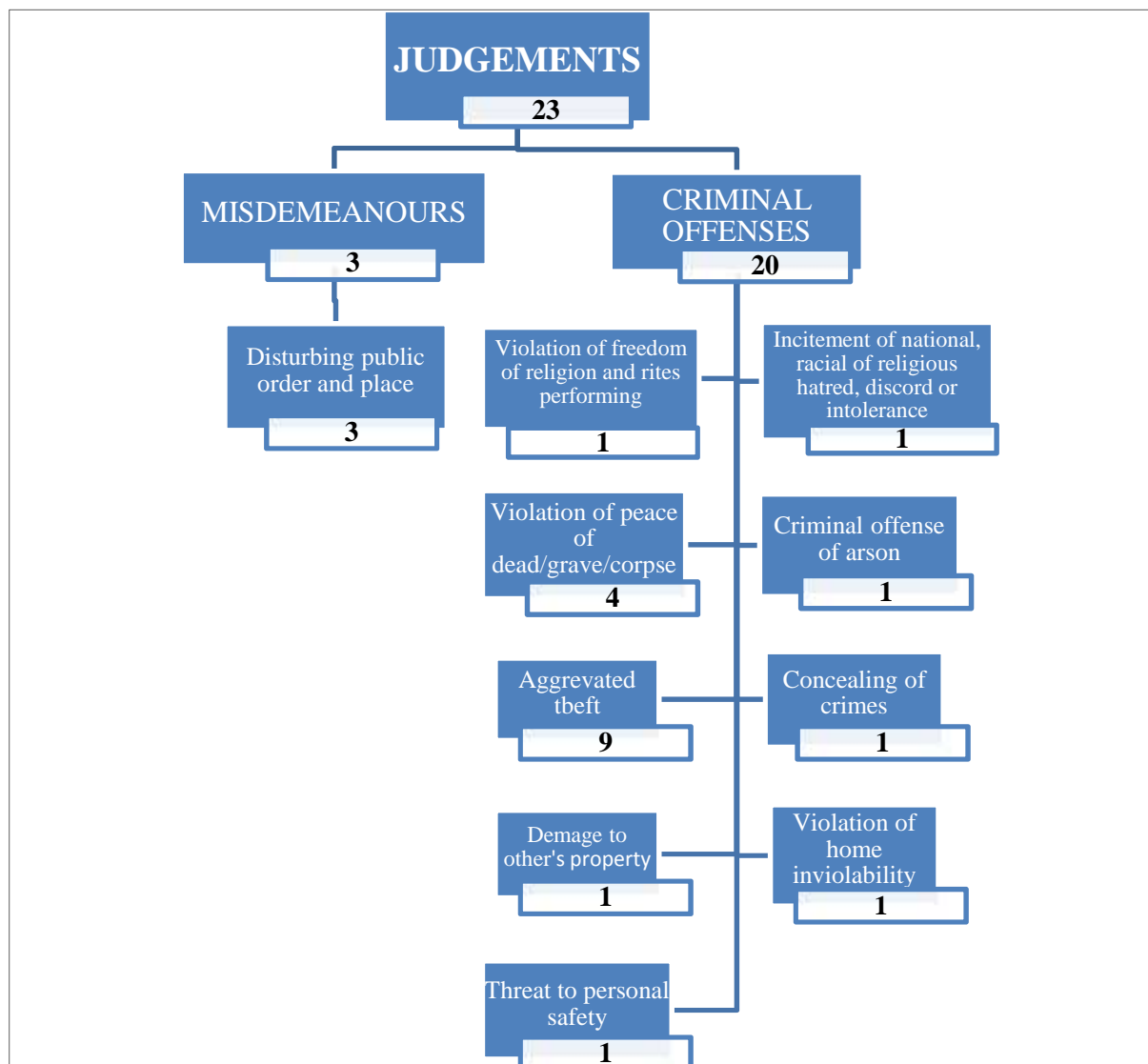


Figure 12: Chart of judgments adopted for the period 2010-2014

Table 3: List of attacks on religious buildings and churches for which judgments were adopted

Name of religious building	Date of attack	Type of committed offense	Type of sentence
City Muslim cemetery Lipi – Bijeljina	10/11/2010	Violation of grave or corpse – Art. 401 Para. 1 CC RS	Imprisonment 4 months – suspended sentence 1 year
Parish Church Ovarovo – Travnik	07/11/2010	Aggravated theft – Art. 287 CC FBiH	Educational measure – intensified parental supervision
Synagogue House of Peace – Doboj	11/11/2010	Incitement of national, racial or religious hatred, discord or intolerance – Art. 390 Para 1 CC RS	Educational measure – intensified parental supervision
Mosque Tekija – Bosanska Gradiška	11/01/2011	Criminal offense of arson – Art. 250 Para 1 CC RS	Six months imprisonment and compensation of damages in the amount of 9,522 BAM
Church of St. George – Tuzla	14/02/2011	Concealing of crime – Art. 300 Para 1 CC FBiH	Suspended sentence of 5 months imprisonment
Monastery of St. Bonaventure – Visoko	09/03/2011	Aggravated theft - Art. 287 CC FBiH	Six months imprisonment

<b>Name of religious building</b>	<b>Date of attack</b>	<b>Type of committed offense</b>	<b>Type of sentence</b>
<b>Urijanska Mosque – Novi Grad</b>	29/03/2011	Misdemeanour of violation of public order and peace – Art. 8 Law on PO&P RS	The misdemeanour warrant for insulting and driving while intoxicated
<b>Sefer-bay’s Mosque – Banja Luka</b>	29/05/2011	Misdemeanour of violation of public order and peace – Art. 8 Law on PO&P RS	The misdemeanour warrant
<b>Temple of St. Joachim and Ana - Kalesija</b>	30/06/2011	Aggravated theft - Art. 287 CC FBiH	Suspended sentence 6 months imprisonment with probation period of 2 years
<b>Attack on chief Muslim priest - Gacko</b>	13/10/2011	Threat to personal safety – Art. 169 Para 1 CC RS	2 months imprisonment
<b>Attack on chief Muslim priest – Kozarska Dubica</b>	15/10/2011	Misdemeanour of violation of public order and peace – Art. 8 Law on PO&P RS	The misdemeanour warrant
<b>Catholic cemetery of St. Michael - Lukavac</b>	07/11/2011	Aggravated theft - Art. 287 CC FBiH	6 and 9 months imprisonment
<b>Catholic chapel at the cemetery in Breške – Tuzla</b>	17-29.01.2012	Aggravated theft - Art. 287 CC FBiH	6 and 7 months imprisonment with probation period of 2 years
<b>Atik Mosque - Bijeljina</b>	30/07/2012	Violation of freedom of religion and performance of religious rites – Art. 178 Para 2 CC RS	Three persons sentenced to a fine of 600 KM per person
<b>Orthodox cemetery in Pe išta - Srebrenica</b>	04/11/2012	Violation of grave or corpse – Art. 401 Para. 1 CC RS	4 months imprisonment and educational measure – intensified parental supervision
<b>Muslim cemetery Selimovi i - Bijeljina</b>	20/01/2013	Violation of grave or corpse – Art. 401 Para. 1 CC RS	4 months imprisonment – suspended sentence 1 year
<b>Orthodox cemetery in Ponjevi i – Donji Vakuf</b>	24/06/2013	Violation of peace of the deceased – Art. 379 Para 1 CC FBiH	Educational measure – intensified parental supervision
<b>Church of St. Elias the Prophet - Zenica</b>	04/10/2013	Damage to others’ property – Art. 293 Para 1 CC FBiH	4 months imprisonment with probation period of 1 year
<b>Parish House in Ljubija - Prijedor</b>	12/01/2014	Aggravated theft - Art. 232 CC RS	10 months imprisonment – suspended sentence 1 year
<b>Majlis of IC Bosanska Dubica</b>	19/03/2014	Aggravated theft - Art. 232 CC RS	Legal measure of referral to house of correction
<b>Emperor’s Mosque in Dobrun</b>	18/05/2014	Violation of inviolability of home - Art. 170 Para 1 CC RS	Fine in an amount of 1,500 KM
<b>Serbian Orthodox Church in Janja - Bijeljina</b>	12/03/2014.	Aggravated theft - Art. 232 CC RS	4 months imprisonment – suspended sentence 1 year
<b>Building of church municipality Lopare</b>	24/04/2014	Aggravated theft - Art. 232 CC RS	1 year imprisonment – suspended sentence 2 years

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Although there are still a large number of attacks on religious buildings, we believe that there are reasons for optimism. The number of attacks is an important factor but not the only one where we need to assess the overall state in the field.

One of the reasons for optimism is certainly increasingly frequent public condemnation of attacks on religious buildings that occur without the initiative of IRC BiH. Last year there were several good examples of how the local community should react when a religious building is attacked. These are the situations when public condemnation comes from the local administration, mayor, city council, religious communities and non-governmental sector. If the police identify the perpetrators and take action, then it is a good example of how the local community should react. This is especially important if the attack was carried out on a religious community that is a minority in the area.

We support and encourage municipalities to set up video surveillance of religious buildings that were repeatedly attacked. Such video surveillance has been established in the municipality of Novo Sarajevo and achieved excellent results. The establishment of video surveillance in the municipalities of Bijeljina, Banja Luka, Ilidža and Novi Grad Sarajevo is in process.

During this year we also noticed that the competent authorities (police and prosecutors' offices) more frequently qualify attacks on religious buildings as crimes, which was one of our recommendations in the previous reports. It is crucial to identify perpetrators and to strictly punish them. Small fines and suspended sentences will not achieve preventive effect on future perpetrators. We are pleased that during the last year we have established good cooperation with the Association of Judges and Prosecutors of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A representative of IRC BiH was invited to the Annual Symposium of Judges and Prosecutors, which took place on 1 October 2014 in Neum. At this symposium the representative of IRC BiH had the opportunity to present the results of this project and the basic problems we face. Judges and prosecutors believe that the attacks on religious buildings are a serious problem and threat to the BIH society and show a willingness to contribute to combating these negative phenomena.



We are grateful to all the media that follow this project and regularly publish our condemnation of attacks on religious buildings and our calls to respect differences. We consider it of paramount importance for the promotion of tolerance and protection of human rights of all citizens in BiH.

We must emphasize that we have very good cooperation with police stations, prosecutors' offices and courts in BiH as well as the BiH Ministry of Security. Our desire is that through this project the IRC BiH as a non-governmental organization contributes to the better protection of religious buildings across BiH.

Also, we thank our donor, the US Embassy in Sarajevo that financially supports this project for the third year in a row.

To improve the protection of religious buildings in BiH, we need to do the following:

**- TO TIGHTEN SANCTIONS AGAINST PERPETRATORS OF ATTACKS**

Sanctions imposed for perpetrators of attacks on religious buildings are still not adequate. We noticed an increase in the number of criminal proceedings conducted against the perpetrators but we still believe that harsher penalties must be imposed because it is the only way to satisfy the victims and act preventively to stop such attacks on religious buildings.

**- TO ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE PUBLIC CONDEMNATION OF ATTACKS ON RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS**

In attacks on religious buildings it is very important how the local community reacts. Many victims have emphasized that they appreciated a lot public condemnation of attacks organized by the IRC in collaboration with religious communities and churches in BiH. The attack on a religious building often aims to send a message to a particular religious group that they are not welcome in a particular environment. It is therefore important that the local community reacts in a way that denies such a message, and that representatives of civil society condemn the attack and make clear that the group is welcome in the local environment. Also, it is necessary to assist the victim in removing the effects of the attack in terms of removing offensive graffiti or repairing damage to the building.

- TO ESTABLISH VIDEO SURVEILLANCE OF RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS THAT WERE REPEATEDLY UNDER ATTACK

IRC re-emphasizes the need for setting up video surveillance on the buildings that have repeatedly been the subject of attack. In some religious buildings where video surveillance was established the attacks on the building have stopped.