



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

MONITORING OF ATTACKS AGAINST RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS AND OTHER
LOCATIONS OF IMPORTANCE FOR CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES
IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – PROTECTION OF HOLY PLACES

THIRD ANNUAL REPORT

(REPORTING PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 1, 2012 TO OCTOBER 31, 2013)

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1. INTRODUCTION

"The Monitoring of Attacks Against Religious Buildings and Other Locations of Importance for Churches and Religious Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina", or, shortly, the project entitled "Protection of Holy Places" resulted from the one-year pilot project of the Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina (IRC BiH), which was implemented in cooperation with the Nansen Dialog Center and Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights. This project had been developed under the wider project entitled "Universal Code on Holy Places", which aims at the adoption of a document in the form of a declaration or resolution of the United Nations (UN) in order to protect holy places of all religions throughout the planet. The basic goal of the project "Protection of Holy Places" is the improvement of religious buildings and other locations of importance for churches and religious communities (holy places) of all religions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The aims of the project are the introduction of records on attacks against religious buildings, analysis of gathered data in terms of: the type of attack, reason of attack, identification of perpetrators and locations in which the attacks occur, etc. After the analysis of findings of monitoring of attacks against religious buildings in every reporting period, the Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina will define the proposals for the competent bodies in relation to possible improvements of protection of religious buildings in certain areas.

We would like to use this opportunity to especially thank the US Embassy that financed the implementation of the project in this reporting period (November 1, 2012 – October 31, 2013) by providing a grant.

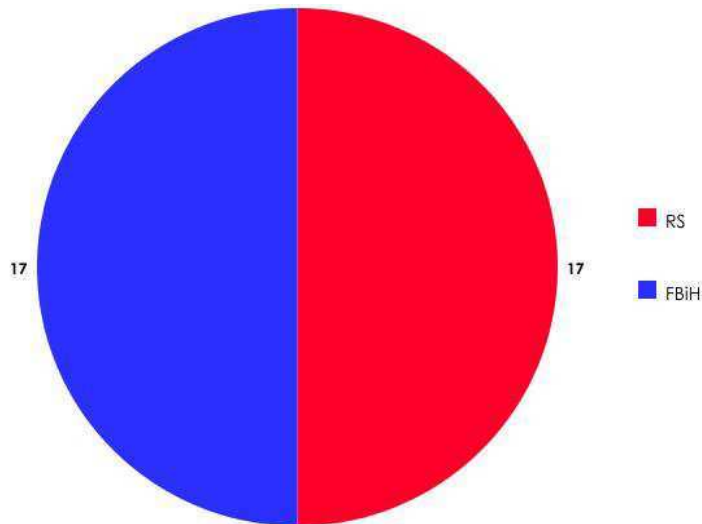
2. FINDINGS

During project implementation (November 1, 2012 – October 31, 2013), the Secretariat of the IRC BiH received 34 reports on attacks against religious buildings, religious officials and believers who are directly related to the religious buildings. This number of reported attacks probably does not represent the total number of attacks against religious buildings in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The data on the attacks against religious buildings were gathered in two ways: by obtaining information from religious officials that reported attacks in their local community and by obtaining information on attacks against religious buildings through different types of media and verifying such information through local religious officials. The second way of obtaining data aimed at ensuring the most complete overview of the total number of attacks against religious buildings.

It is a fact that none of the traditional churches and religious communities was exempted from attacks against their property, and attacks occurred throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Out of the total number of 34 attacks, 17 attacks in this reporting period occurred in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 17 attacks occurred in Republika Srpska

Number of attacks by entities in 2012/2013

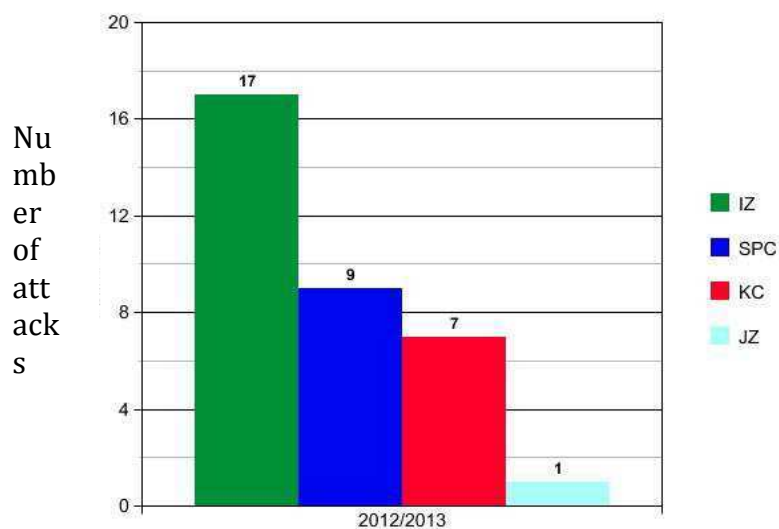


The cities/municipalities in which an attack against religious buildings occurred are the following ones:

1. Banja Luka – 3
2. Bihać – 1
3. Bijeljina – 3
4. Bosansko Grahovo – 1
5. Bugojno – 1
6. Čelinac – 1
7. Donji Vakuf – 1
8. Foča – 1
9. Fojnica – 1
10. Glamoč – 1
11. Gradiška – 1
12. Kozarska Dubica – 2
13. Livno – 1
14. Mostar – 1
15. Mrkonjić Grad – 1
16. Prijedor – 1
17. Sarajevo / Ilidža – 2
18. Srebrenica – 1
19. Travnik – 1
20. Tuzla – 2
21. Zavidovići – 1
22. Zenica – 2
23. Zvornik – 3
24. Žepče – 1

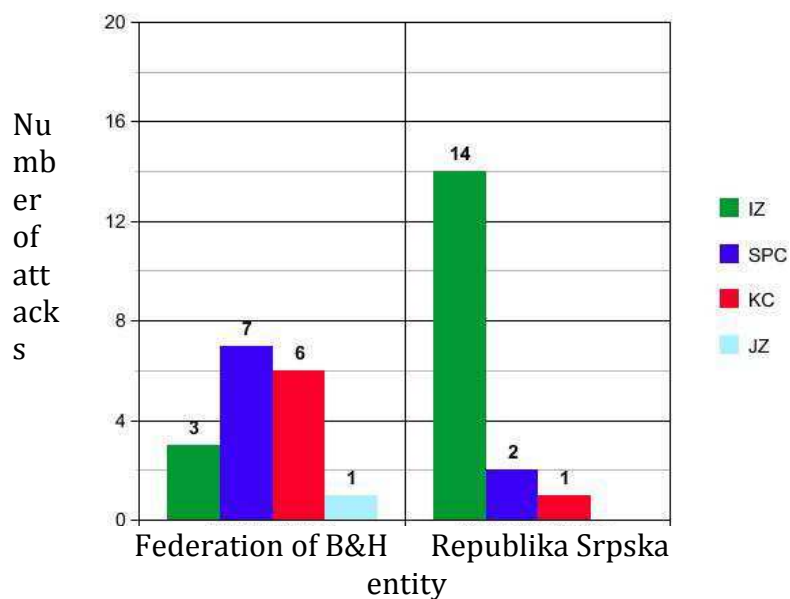
Out of the total number of attacks, 17 attacks occurred against buildings of the Islamic Community, 9 attacks against buildings of the Serb Orthodox Church, 7 attacks against buildings of the Catholic Church and 1 attack against a building of the Jewish community.

Attacks against churches and religious communities in 2012/2013



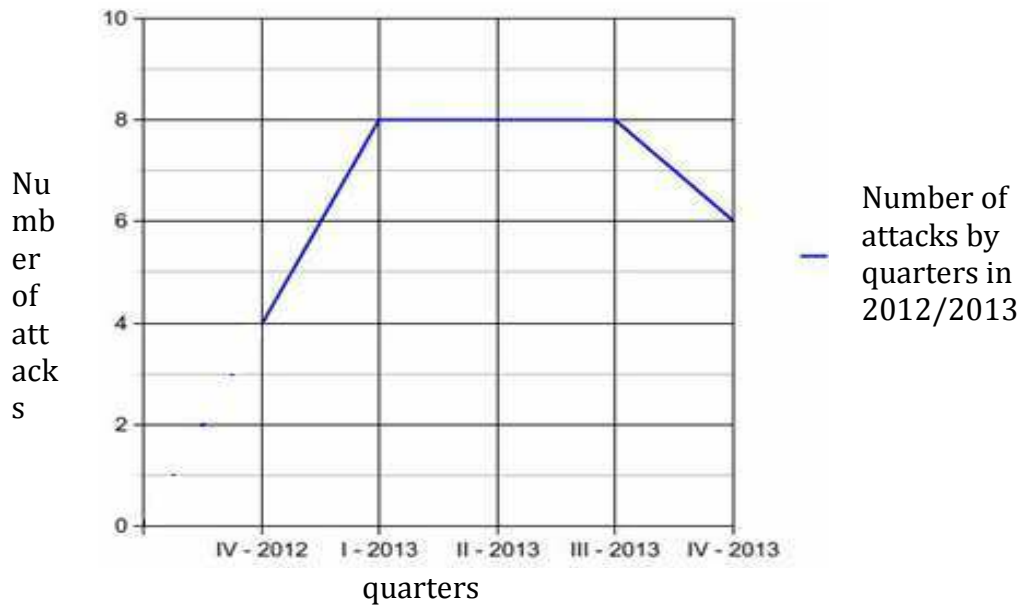
In this reporting period, most attacks occurred against religious buildings of churches and religious communities that belong to minority communities in terms of the number of community members.

Attacks against churches and religious communities in 2012/2013



If we analyze the reporting periods by annual quarters, we will see approximately the same number of attacks during the year.

Number of attacks by quarters in 2012/2013

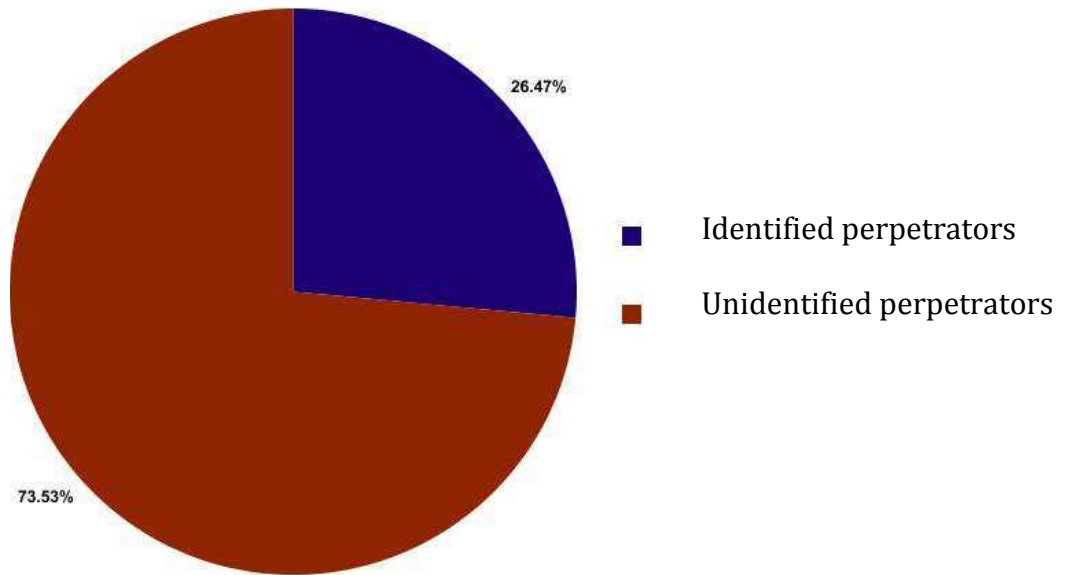


The IRC BiH has condemned every of the reported attacks, and when needed, it also organized a field visit to the attacked church and community and has condemned the attacks together with the representatives of other churches and religious communities and representatives of the local administration. We are particularly encouraged by the fact that there are cases when the representatives of churches and religious communities in a certain local community jointly condemn the attacks against religious buildings at their own initiative.

In addition to joint condemnation of attacks, the IRC also organized meetings with the representatives of police agencies and prosecutor's offices throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the focus being placed on the locations of frequent attacks. The findings of monitoring of attacks against religious buildings in the past reporting period were presented during these meetings and possible improvements of protection of religious buildings were discussed.

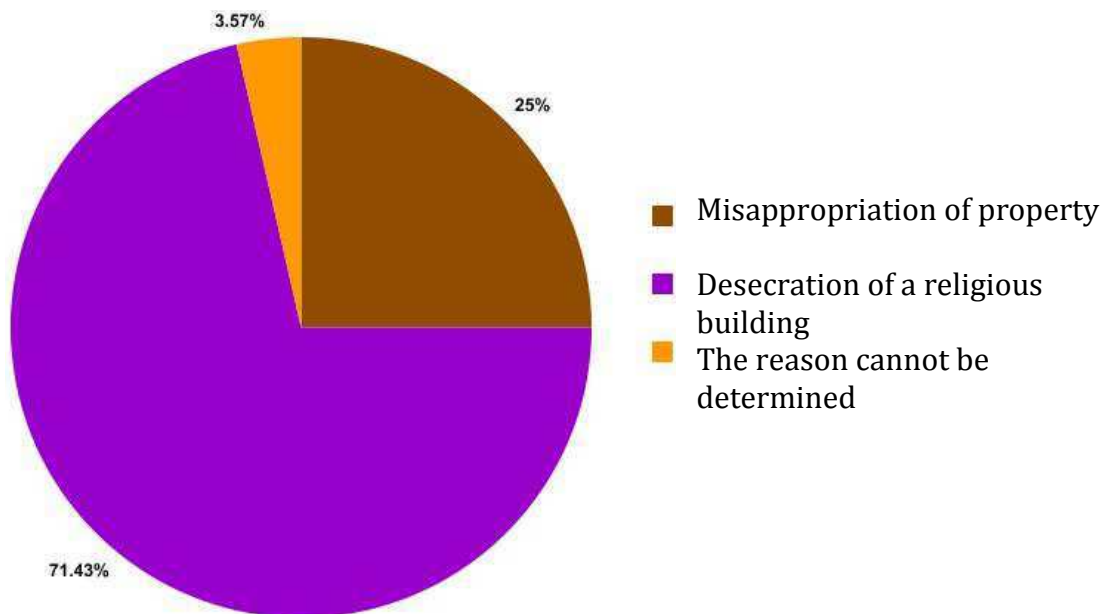
When it comes to the percentage of resolved cases or the number of identified perpetrators, we received the following data from the competent bodies in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska: Out of the total number of 34 attacks in this reporting period, the perpetrators were identified only in 9 cases, which amounts to 26.47%.

Identification of perpetrators in percentages



If we divide the attacks against religious buildings based on the reasons for the attacks based on our information, we observe that most of the attacks (71.43%) occurred for the purpose to desecrate religious buildings, 25% of attacks were related to misappropriation of property and only 3.57% of the total number of attacks are a combination of misappropriation of property and desecration of religious buildings.

Division by reason of the attack in 2012/2013



3. LIST OF RECEIVED REPORTS

The list of attacks against religious buildings, religious officials and believers that are directly related to religious buildings for the reporting period from November 1, 2012 to October 31, 2013 is given in the chronological order based on the date of report and registration number.

Registration No.	Name of religious building	Church or religious community	Location	Date
084-11/2012	Orthodox cemetery in Pećišta	Serb Orthodox Church	Srebrenica	Nov 6, 2012
085-11/2012	Parish Church of Mary Help of Christians	Catholic Church	Žepče	Nov 27, 2012
086-11/2012	Ferhadija Mosque	Islamic Community	Banja Luka	Nov 27, 2012
087-12/2012	Kazanbašča cemetery	Islamic Community	Zvornik	Dec 27, 2012
088-01/2013	Hadžimahmut Mosque	Islamic Community	Zvornik	Jan 3, 2013
089-01/2013	Selimovići cemetery	Islamic Community	Bijeljina	Jan 20, 2013
090-02/2013	Imam House	Islamic Community	Čelinac	Feb 21, 2013
091-02/2013	Sefer-Bey Mosque	Islamic Community	Banja Luka	Feb 25, 2013
092-03/2013	Čaršijska-Cerića Mosque	Islamic Community	Kozarska Dubica	March 11, 2013
093-03/2013	Filial Church of the Lady of the Angels	Catholic Church	Fojnica	March 11, 2013
094-03/2013	Imam House at the Islamic congregation Dubrave II	Islamic Community	Gradiška	March 20, 2013
095-03/2013	Church of St. Anthony in Petričevac	Catholic Church	Banja Luka	March 30, 2013
096-04/2013	Sultan Sulejman Atik Mosque	Islamic Community	Bijeljina	April 22, 2013
097-04/2013	Orthodox Temple of St. Sava in Blažuj	Serb Orthodox Church	Sarajevo	April 22, 2013
098-05/2013	Čaršijska Mosque in Prijedor	Islamic Community	Prijedor	May 8, 2013
099-05/2013	Orthodox Temple of St. Sava in Blažuj	Serb Orthodox Church	Sarajevo	May 22, 2013
100-05/2013	Koski Mehmed-Pasha Mosque	Islamic Community	Mostar	May 30, 2013
101-06/2013	Mosque in Pritoka	Islamic Community	Bihać	June 20, 2013
102-06/2013	Orthodox cemetery in Ponjevići	Islamic Community	Donji Vakuf	June 25, 2013
103-06/2013	Orthodox Chapel in Osojnica	Serb Orthodox Church	Zenica	June 23, 2013
104-07/2013	City Catholic cemetery Sutanovići	Catholic Church	Bugojno	July 1, 2013
105-07/2013	Orthodox cemetery in Gostović	Serb Orthodox Church	Zavidovići	July 14, 2013
106-07/2013	Čaršijska Mosque	Islamic Community	Kozarska Dubica	July 18, 2013
10708/2013	Begsuja Mosque	Islamic Community	Zvornik	Aug 8, 2013
10808/2013	Congregation Temple of the Ascension of the Holy Mother of God	Serb Orthodox Church	Tuzla	Aug 14, 2013
10909/2013	Congregation Church Ovčarevo	Catholic Church	Travnik	Sept 2, 2013
11009/2013	Jewish cemetery	Jewish Community	Tuzla	Sept 30, 2013
11109/2013	Parish house in Glavičice	Serb Orthodox Church	Bijeljina	Sept 27, 2013
11210/2013	Church of St. Elijah the Prophet	Catholic Church	Zenica	Oct 5, 2013
11310/2013	City Mosque	Islamic Community	Mrkonjić Grad	Oct 14, 2013
11410/2013	Mustaj-Bey Šuvalija Mosque	Islamic Community	Foča	Oct 15, 2013
11510/2013	Mramorje cemetery chapel	Serb Orthodox Church	Bosansko Grahovo	Oct 17, 2013
11610/2013	Catholic cemetery chapel	Catholic Church	Glamoč	Oct 20, 2013

11710/2013	Muslim cemetery in Potkraj	Islamic Community	Livno	Oct 30, 2013
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4. CONCLUSION ON THE JOINT CONDEMNATION OF ATTACKS AGAINST RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

All joint condemnations of attacks against religious buildings organized by the Secretariat of the IRC BiH were organized through the regular hierarchy of churches and religious communities. Since the very beginning, the project has had the support of the religious leaders from all four traditional churches and religious communities. In most cases, religious officials do understand the problems of the minority communities, since every of the churches and religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a minority in some parts of the country and everyone faces similar problems. This is one of the main reasons why 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 against religious buildings.

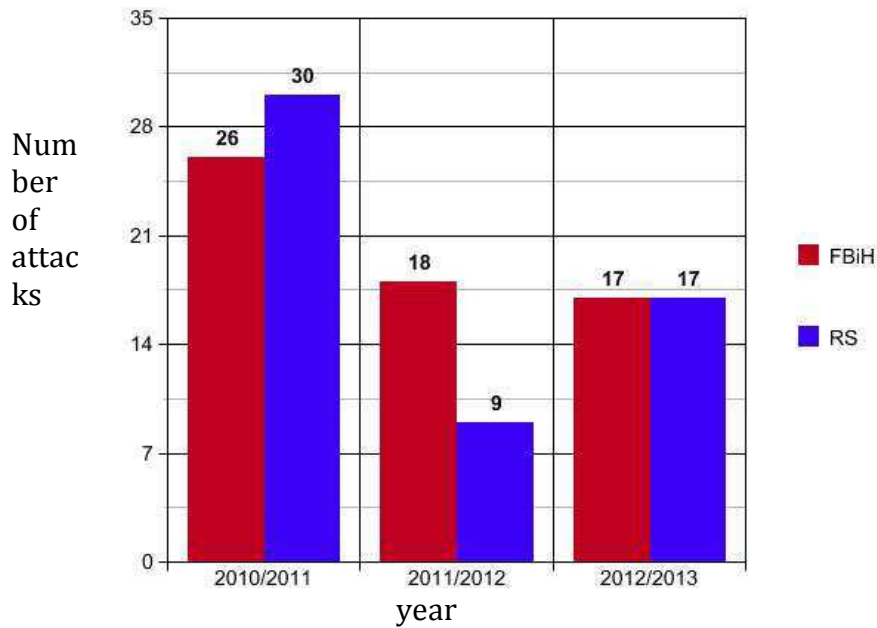
5. MEDIA REPORTING ABOUT THE PROJECT

The media have had positive reports on the project since the very beginning. Media representatives have recognized the importance of the project and have made a great contribution to informing the public on the project and have thus contributed to the affirmation of an atmosphere of tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the society of Bosnia and Herzegovina. During a press conference announcing the beginning of the project, there were all main TV and radio stations and representatives of the press. The project was announced during the central news of all public services. Private TV and radio stations and the press have also broadcast the message. Many media have continued covering the project and reporting regularly on our condemnations of attacks against religious buildings. The reporting has mostly been fair and balanced. In general, we can be satisfied with the media reporting.

6. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

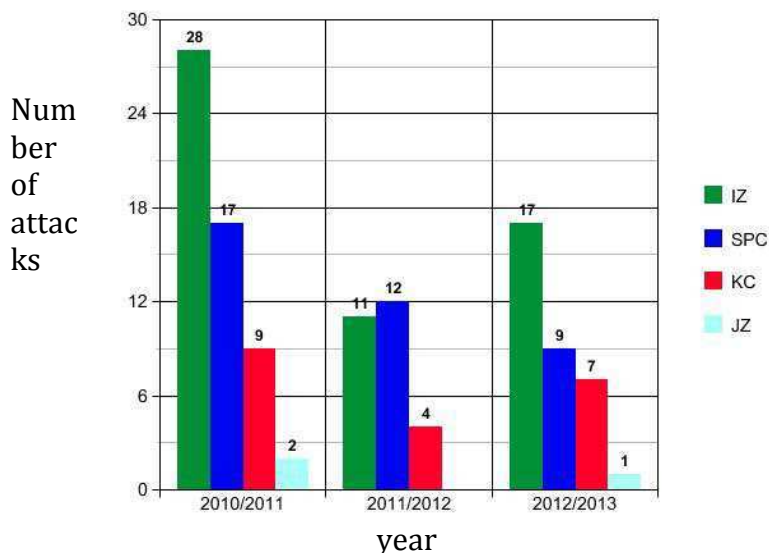
From the beginning of project implementation (November 1, 2010) until the end of this reporting period (October 31, 2013), 117 attacks against religious buildings, religious officials and believers who are directly related to religious buildings were registered. Out of the total number of 117 attacks against religious buildings from the beginning of project implementation until the end of this reporting period, 56 attacks occurred in Republika Srpska and 61 attacks occurred in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Attacks against churches and religious communities in 2010/2013



Out of the total number of 117 attacks against religious buildings from the beginning of project implementation until the end of this reporting period, 56 attacks were conducted against the Islamic Community, 38 against the buildings of the Serb Orthodox Church, 20 against buildings of the Catholic Church, and 3 attacks occurred against the buildings of the Jewish Community.

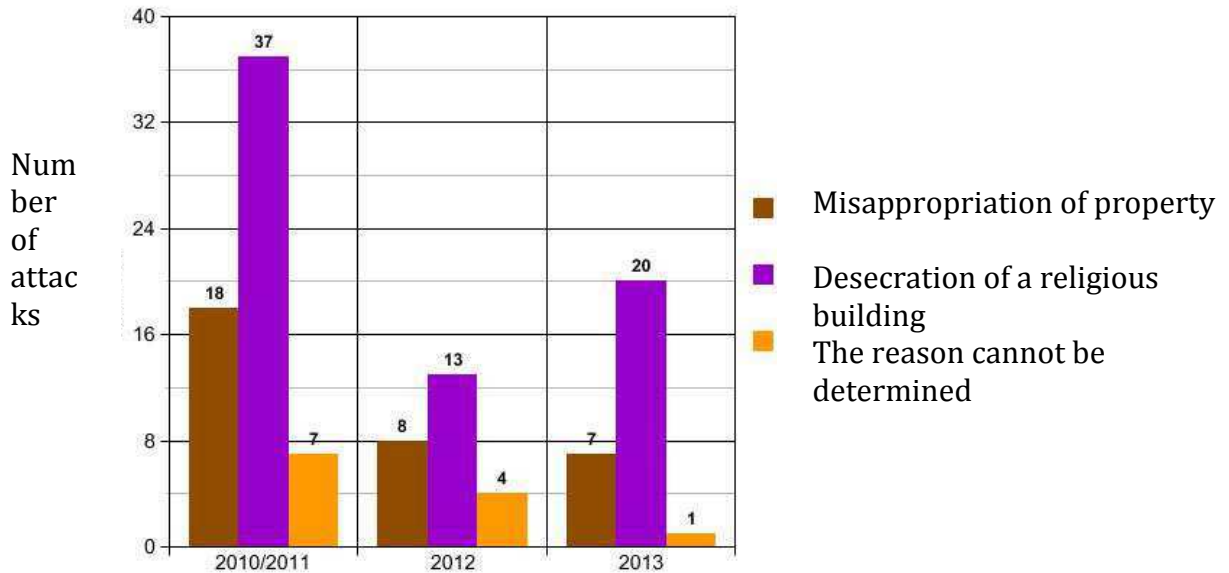
Attacks against churches and religious communities for the period 2010/2013



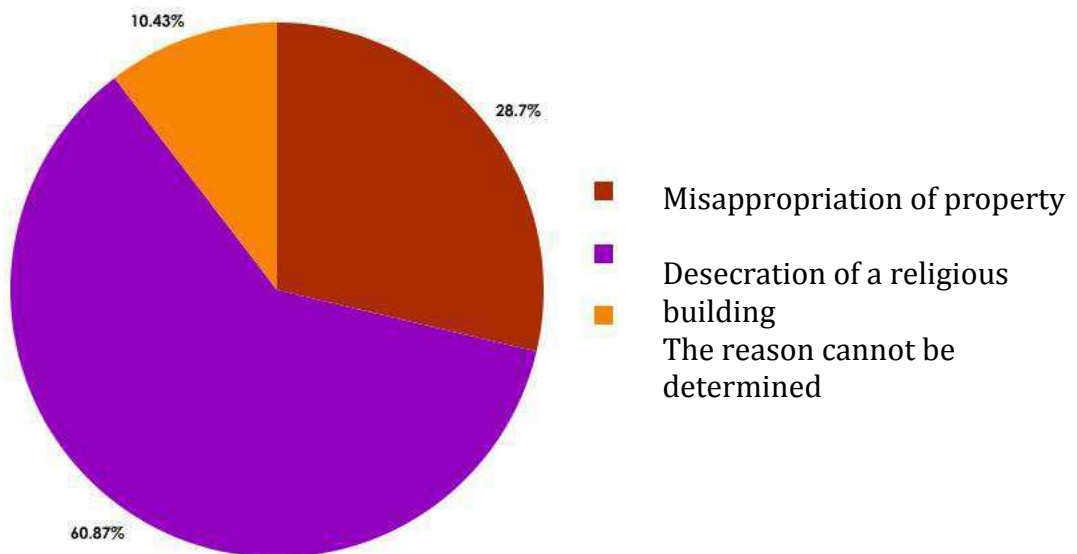
Out of the total number of 117 attacks against religious buildings from the beginning of project implementation until the end of this reporting period, according to our information, the reason for 60.87% of attacks was desecration of religious buildings, misappropriation of property was the reason for 28.7% of attacks and in case of 10.43% of attacks, it was

not possible to determine the reason for the attack against a religious building.

Division by reason of the attack in 2012/2013



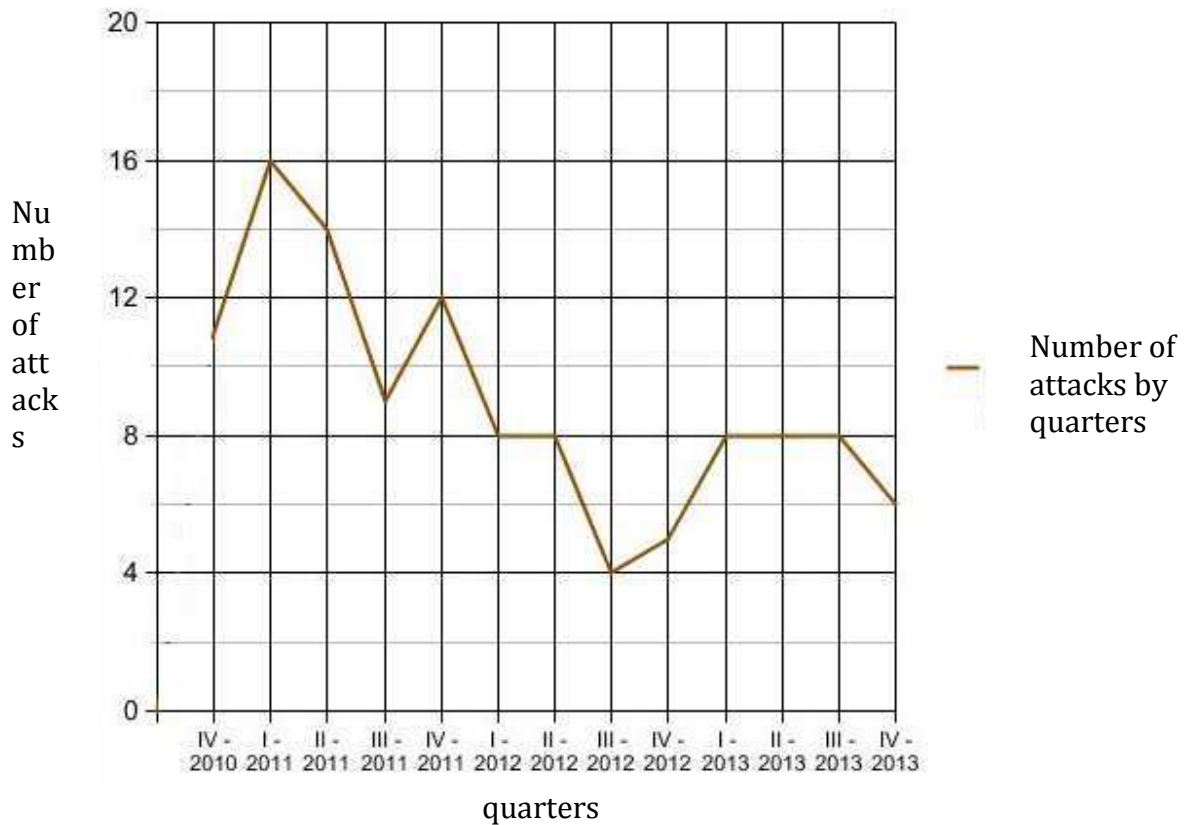
Division by reason of the attack in 2012/2013



If we present the number of attacks by quarters for the period from the beginning of project implementation (November 1, 2010) until the end of this reporting period (October 31, 2013) graphically, we will see that the number of attacks against religious buildings is continuously decreasing with minor oscillations.

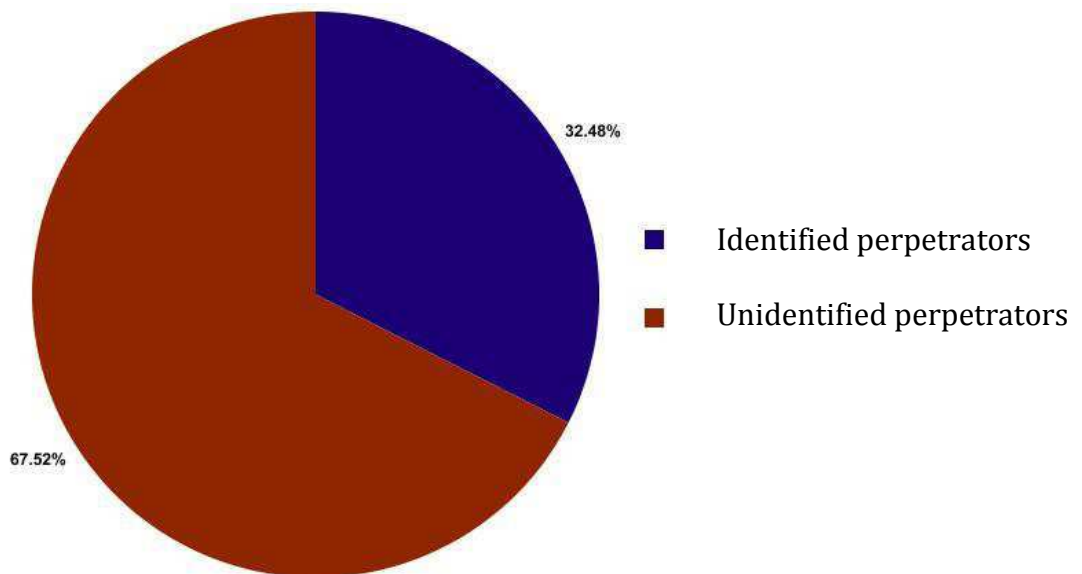
The highest number of attacks occurred in the first quarter 2011, i.e. in the period January-March 2011, as many as 16 of them, whereas the least number of attacks occurred in the period July-September (III quarter) 2012, 4 of them.

Number of attacks by quarters for the period 2010/2013



From the beginning of project implementation (November 1, 2010) until the end of this reporting period (October 31, 2013) out of a total of 117 reported attacks, the competent bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina identified the perpetrators in case of 38 reported attacks, which amounts to 32.48% out of the total number of attacks.

Identification of perpetrators in percentages



7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings of monitoring of attacks against religious buildings, after three years of monitoring, the Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina makes the following recommendations:

- INTRODUCTION OF STRICTER SANCTIONS FOR PERPETRATORS OF ATTACKS -

Over the three years of project duration, we have noticed that the sanctions imposed on perpetrators are not adequate. There was an increase in the number of criminal proceedings against the perpetrators, but we still believe that stricter sanctions are needed, since that is the only way to meet the expectations of victims and prevent such attacks against religious buildings from being repeated.

- ENCOURAGING AND GIVING IMPETUS TO PUBLIC CONDEMNATION OF ATTACKS -

In case of attacks against religious buildings, the reaction of the local community is very important. Many victims emphasized that the public condemnation of the attacks organized by the IRC in cooperation with religious communities and churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina meant a lot to them. An attack against a religious building frequently has the purpose of sending a message to a certain religious group that it is not welcome in a certain area. It is thus important that the local community reacts in such a manner that it refutes such a message and that representatives of the civil society condemn the attack and state clearly that the group is welcome in the local community. It is also necessary to provide help to the victim in the removal of consequences of the attack, such as the removal of insulting graffiti or repair of damages on the building.

- SETTING UP A VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM FOR RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS THAT WERE ATTACKED SEVERAL TIMES -

The IRC emphasizes again the need for introducing video surveillance systems for buildings that have already been targets of attacks. These proposals have been accepted and we know that this is being implemented in several municipalities, such as: Novo Sarajevo, Ilidža, Banja Luka, Bijeljina, etc.

In case of some religious buildings where a video surveillance system had been introduced, there were no more attacks against that building.

8. CONCLUSION

During the third year of monitoring of attacks against religious buildings, it is possible to observe a slight increase in the number of attacks. The attacks aiming at desecration of religious buildings are particularly worrisome. The Interreligious Council will not accept this fact, but will continue fighting this plague in cooperation with all other competent institutions and in compliance with its practice.

The attacks against religious buildings are mostly treated as violations or criminal offence of damage of property. Very few are treated as criminal

offence of causing religious hatred. We believe that this has to change, since attacks against religious buildings are very frequently motivated by hatred towards a certain religious community.

We are glad about joint statements and increased number of public condemnation of attacks against religious buildings by public officials. Also, the activities of certain municipalities related to the introduction of the video surveillance and repairs of the damages caused to certain religious buildings should be praised.

We are satisfied with the cooperation with the media and thankful to all media that covered and published our joint condemnation of attacks and have thus contributed to the condemnation and promotion of tolerance throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We have to underline the good cooperation with police stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, prosecutor's offices, courts and all other competent institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

More data on the project itself as well as the electronic version of the report may be found on the web site of the Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina: www.mrv.ba.