



Alberto López Navarro
HazteOir.org
José Rodríguez Pinilla, 23
28016, Madrid, Spain
<http://www.hazteoir.org>

**HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING - Warsaw, 26th
October 2011**

**Working Session II - Fundamental freedoms - Freedom of thought,
conscience, religion or belief**

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALBERTO LÓPEZ-NAVARRO
MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF HAZTEOIR.ORG**

During recent years, there has been a steady rise in reported cases of harassment and discrimination against Christians in OSCE participating states. The fact that in many cases the authorities are failing to prosecute those offences increases the problem, giving the perpetrators a sense of impunity and further encouraging such crimes.

In Spain, pilgrims to this August's World Youth Day were verbally abused and physically attacked during the course of a demonstration, supposedly against public financing of the event, but which developed into an exhibition of hate against Christians. Though the police was present, it did not receive the command to act until the aggressions became widespread. As of now, the Government has not started an official investigation on the matter.

In many OSCE participating states a significant number of religious hate motivated crimes have been registered, which however, they do not seem to be investigated and punished with due diligence.

This trend is even more worrying in the current context of economic crisis affecting many OSCE participating states, with worsening living conditions and increasing unemployment. Historical experience shows us that under conditions of mounting societal stress, the usual response is to look for a social group that serves as a scapegoat. In Spain, we're seeing the first signs of that, as the group which calls themselves 'The indignants' movement is blaming the crisis upon "big business", politicians... and Christians, illogical as it might sound, but real.

It is our concern that if crimes against expression of religious beliefs are not duly prosecuted, the current situation will only worsen.

References:

<http://www.hazteoir.org/noticia/40961-peregrinos-franceses-denuncian-agresiones-laicistas-sufridas-en-sol>

<http://www.outono.net/elentir/2011/08/18/los-anticatolicos-a-un-brasileno-esa-bandera-la-vamos-a-quemar/>

<http://www.hazteoir.org/noticia/40735-marcha-intransigencia-arremete-peregrinos-jmj>

<http://www.hazteoir.org/noticia/38455-incendio-librerias-laicismo-sub-otro-peldano>

<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2011/08/18/espana/1313672054.html>

http://elmundo.orbyt.es/2011/08/18/tu_mundo/1313695702.html

<http://www.hazteoir.org/noticia/38455-incendio-librerias-laicismo-sub-otro-peldano>

Recommendations:

- To demand the same degree of protection for Christians expressing their beliefs that as for any other citizen.
- To Maintain Freedom of Religion, Conscience and Expression as a Key Mandate of OSCE/ODIHR and the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office's Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination
- To create working documents on hate crimes against Christians – as they exist for example with regard to anti-semitism.
- To research and document hate crimes against Christians separately, because this pressing issue must not to be mixed up with differently motivated crimes.
- To create an international day against discrimination against Christians; or a day of commemoration of contemporary violence against Christians. There are many such days, but the Christian issue is largely missing.