

Attack in Nice: churches placed under police protection. The bishops: “French Catholics will not surrender to fear”

French Catholics will not surrender to fear despite churches in Nice have been closed as a precaution and placed under the protection of the police. Church bells ring across France at 3 p.m. to pay homage to the victims of the attack and as a sign of solidarity, announced by French bishops in a statement released a few hours after the stabbing attack inside and near the Basilica of Notre-Dame in Nice. France went through hours of anxiety immediately after 9 a.m. when a man shouting Allah Akbar plunged the country into the abyss of terrorism. Extremists targeted the Basilica of Notre-Dame in Nice just a few days after the heinous beheading of Professor Samuel Paty. The attack left three people dead and several others wounded. A woman was beheaded. One of the people killed was the church's caretaker, according to a tweet from the mayor of Nice, Christian Estrosi. <https://twitter.com/cestrosi/status/1321743847362318338> **French Prime Minister Jean Castex left the National Assembly**, where the debate on new Covid-19 containment measures was underway, to join the crisis unit set up by the Ministry of the Interior. While in Nice the victims were being mourned, a man armed with a knife was killed by police in Avignon. He reportedly shouted 'Allah Akbar' as he attacked a group of police officers patrolling the streets. A Saudi citizen wounded a guard at the French Consulate in a knife attack in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in the same hours. Only yesterday Charlie Hebdo published a cartoon against Turkish President Erdogan who, in turn, harshly criticized France and President Emmanuel Macron over the reaction to the murder of Professor Samuel Paty.



[Our thoughts and prayers go to the victims, the wounded, their families and loved ones. These people were attacked and killed because they were in the Basilica. They stood as a symbol that had to be destroyed.” These killings remind us of the martyrdom of Father Jacques Hamel, the priest slaughtered in 2016 by two young extremists while celebrating Mass in Rouen. These hideous attacks affect our entire country. The purpose of this form of terrorism is to spread an atmosphere of anxiety throughout society. This gangrene must urgently be stopped while there is an urgent need to rediscover fraternity, indispensable to keep us united in the face of these threats. Despite gnawing grief, Catholics will not succumb to fear and, together with the entire nation, intend to face this vicious, deadly threat.”](#)

"I am filled with endless sadness - reads a communiqué released by the diocese - as a human being before what other beings, called human beings, are capable of." The bishop announced that all the churches of Nice have been closed until further notice and placed under police protection. "All my prayers go to the victims, to their dear ones, to the police officers on the front lines of this tragedy, to the priests and the faithful wounded in their faith and hopes. May Christ's spirit of forgiveness prevail in the face of these barbaric acts." **The French people were deeply saddened and shocked by the attack in Nice. The bishops voiced their grief extensively and in their prayers.** The president of the French bishops, Bishop Eric de Moulins-Beaufort, reminded that next Sunday, for the festivity of All Saints, the Gospel Beatitudes will reverberate in churches nationwide: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "My special prayer," he added, "goes to all the faithful of the diocese of Nice and to their bishop, Bishop Marceau. May they remain strong in face of this ordeal and help those who are suffering in the flesh."

https://twitter.com/Mgr_EMB/status/1321749191597633536 **The Muslims of France have also responded.** Hafiz Chems-eddine, rector of the Great Mosque of Paris spoke of "an Islamist threat that is targeting us all." He added: "When I took office, I warned public authorities and all Muslims about the serious situation that we are facing and fighting together. The French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM) strongly condemned "the terrorist attack" and "as a sign of mourning and in solidarity with the victims and their families" requested "all Muslims in France to cancel the celebrations planned for the festivity of Mawlid", which marks the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. <https://twitter.com/CfcmOfficiel/status/1321747887454359554>

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