



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on April 20, 2026

IDF Validates Photo of Soldier Sledgehammering Effigy of Jesus Christ; Outrage Continues

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) confirmed that one of its soldiers smashed an effigy of Jesus Christ torn off of a crucifix.

The soldier committed the sacrilege in southern Lebanon, which Israel is seeking to conquer in its quest for a Greater Israel.

Seen in a photo gone viral, the sledgehammering mirrors the IDF's repeated attacks on Catholic churches and other symbols. The outrage invited widespread condemnation, including that from non-Christians.



Younis Tirawi/X



Appropriate Measures

The IDF announced yesterday that it was scrutinizing the photo, and today revealed that it is, indeed, authentic.

“The photograph depicts an IDF soldier operating in southern Lebanon,” the IDF [announced on X](#):



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The IDF views the incident with great severity and emphasizes that the soldier's conduct is wholly inconsistent with the values expected of its troops.

The incident is being investigated by the Northern Command and is currently being addressed through the chain of command. Appropriate measures will be taken against those involved in accordance with the findings.

Furthermore, the IDF is working to assist the community in restoring the statue to its place.

The IDF is operating to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure established by Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, and has no intention of harming civilian infrastructure, including religious buildings or religious symbols.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared himself aghast at the anti-Christian vandalism.

"As the Jewish state, Israel cherishes and upholds the Jewish values of tolerance and mutual respect between Jews and worshippers of all faiths," [he wrote on X](#):

All religions flourish in our land and we view members of all faiths as equals in building our society and region.

Yesterday, like the overwhelming majority of Israelis, I was stunned and saddened to learn that an IDF soldier damaged a Catholic religious icon in southern Lebanon. I condemn the act in the strongest terms. Military authorities are conducting a criminal probe of the matter and will take appropriately harsh disciplinary action against the offender.

Netanyahu wrote that only in Israel is "freedom to worship" permitted for all, and that Christians are "slaughtered in Syria and Lebanon by Muslims."

Critics Don't Agree

That claim didn't fly with critics such as far-left Democrat podcaster Cenk Uygur. "You have nothing but contempt for other people's religions," the atheist [replied on X](#):

That's why you bombed churches in Gaza. You're currently murdering Armenian Christians in Southern Lebanon. You're pretending to care about Christians here because that's who you rob in America to pay for all your wars.

"This is just another example of Israel's hatred and disregard for other cultures and faiths," Uygur's Young Turks colleague [Ana Kasparian wrote](#). "No one trusts your phony investigations, especially when IDF soldiers get away with rape and murder every single day."

Independent journalist Glenn Greenwald, who is Jewish, [explained what Israel-first Christian Zionists are likely thinking](#): "This Israeli soldier was absolutely justified in smashing the head of the Jesus Christ statue because Hezbollah and Hamas were hiding inside. We owe him our gratitude.□."

The U.S. ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, [who told](#) podcaster Tucker Carlson that Israel was entitled to seize the entire Middle East, [said](#) the soldier's punishment must be "swift [and] severe, & public consequences are needed."

This is "'our greatest ally' that takes billions of our tax dollars and weapons every year," Trump critic



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[Marjorie Taylor Greene wrote.](#)

“Why hasn’t the soldier been named and what actions are being taken?” [asked](#) Jack Posobiec of *Human Events*.

“Horrific,” [said former](#) GOP Representative Matt Gaetz.

On the other hand, Israel-first Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, a Protestant Christian whose pastor [wants to ban](#) certain public expressions of the Catholic faith, has said nothing.

Also silent as of this writing: U.S. President Donald Trump.

For its part, the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land called the sledgehammer attack “a grave affront to the Christian faith” that “adds to other reported incidents of desecration of Christian symbols by IDF soldiers in southern Lebanon.”

[It continued:](#)

It further reveals a disturbing failure in moral and human formation, wherein even the most elementary reverence for the sacred and for the dignity of others has been gravely compromised. The Assembly calls for immediate and decisive disciplinary action, a credible process of accountability, and clear assurances that such conduct will neither be tolerated nor repeated.



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مجلس رؤساء الكنائس الكاثوليكية
في الأرض المقدسة



אספת ההגמונים הקתוליים
של ארץ הקודש

THE ASSEMBLY OF CATHOLIC ORDINARIES OF THE HOLY LAND
Latins, Melkites, Maronites, Syrians, Armenians, Chaldeans, Custody of the Holy Land

Prot. (3) 8/2026

STATEMENT
Profanation of an image of Jesus crucified

The Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land expresses its profound indignation and unreserved condemnation of the desecration of a representation of Jesus Crucified by an Israeli soldier in a Lebanese village.

This act constitutes a grave affront to the Christian faith and adds to other reported incidents of desecration of Christian symbols by IDF soldiers in southern Lebanon. It further reveals a disturbing failure in moral and human formation, wherein even the most elementary reverence for the sacred and for the dignity of others has been gravely compromised.

The Assembly calls for immediate and decisive disciplinary action, a credible process of accountability, and clear assurances that such conduct will neither be tolerated nor repeated.

Yet even in the face of such offense, the Cross remains unassailable in its meaning. As Saint Paul the Apostle declares, "far be it from me to glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal 6:14). For believers, the Cross endures as a source of dignity, hope, and redemption, and as a summons to overcome violence through sacrificial love.

It is precisely in this light that the Church continues to proclaim that true peace cannot be born of violence, but must remain, in the words of Pope Leo XIV, "unarmed... a peace that calls to 'put [the] sword back into its sheath.'"

For this reason, the Assembly renews, with urgency, its call to bring to an end the war that has tormented this region for far too long, and to embrace a path where peace is witnessed in restraint, dialogue, responsibility, and reverence for the sacred and for every human life.

Jerusalem, 20 April 2026



H.B. Pierbattista Card. Pizzaballa
Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem
President of the ACOHL

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Other Attacks

The attack is not a one-off. A year ago, the [IDF bulldozed](#) a statue of St. George in southern Lebanon. On October 9, 2024, an IDF airstrike destroyed [St. George Melkite Catholic Church](#) in Derdghaya, Lebanon. Eight were killed. Israel claimed it was attacking terrorists.



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BREAKING: Israeli bulldozer demolishes Saint George statue in Yaroun — it's on video

The Greek Catholic village's statue — Saint George on horseback — was demolished by an Israeli military bulldozer. Lebanese NNA reported it. Multiple outlets confirmed the video.



6:28 PM · Apr 19, 2026



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And in March, Israel shut down the [Church of the Holy Sepulchre](#) in Jerusalem, the site of Jesus Christ's



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crucifixion and burial. Israeli forces blocked Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, from entering the church for Palm Sunday Mass.

International outrage caused [Netanyahu to reopen](#) the Church for the remainder of Holy Week.



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