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## **US Sees Historic Spike in Mosque Incidents in 2015 - Advocacy Group**

WASHINGTON, December 18 (Sputnik) - The United States is experiencing a sharp rise in vandalism of mosques amid rising Islamophobia in the country, US advocacy group The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) said in a press release. "More mosque incidents were recorded in 2015 than in any year since we started keeping this tally," the release stated on Thursday. CAIR added that Islam has become a central issue in the 2016 presidential campaign. US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has made controversial statements about Muslim immigrants. In November, Trump claimed that Muslims celebrated when the terrorist attacks on the United States took place on September 11, 2001. "November 2015 was the most significant spike, with a total of 17 mosque incidents, with all but 2 of those incidents occurring in the wake of the November 13 Paris terror attacks," the release noted. In early December, Trump called for a "total and complete" shutdown for Muslims entering the United States, in the wake of the December 2 deadly shooting in San Bernardino, California, when a radical Islamic couple shot and killed 14 people.